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ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PERCEPTION AND USE IN THE TOURISM SECTOR IN COSTA RICA.

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Leen Vandenbussche
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ABSTRACT

Tourism is the leading foreign currency in Costa Rica and the main touristic attraction the country has to offer is its natural environment. Costa Rica also gains fame in the world with the Environmental Services Payment Program which aims to maintain the environmental services through payments for forest owners. The main objectives of this study is to identify the different touristic actors and their perception upon the environmental services, to characterize the strategies and actions who promote the utilization of the environmental services, and to propose better contributions to the production of environmental services.

As an attempt to achieve the objectives, a research survey was performed in the province of San José and the coastal towns Puerto Viejo and Cahuita. Fifteen tourism institutions and organizations were interviewed and another twenty-eight tourism companies. Among the tourism companies were eleven lodging companies, eleven travel agencies and six carriers. All interviewees participated voluntarily in the investigation.

The results of the study showed that the tourism sector is gradually evolving to be more environmentally friendly. All the tourism actors acknowledge the importance of the natural environment and 40% of the interviewed tourism companies are familiar with the concept of environmental services. There are several programs from the tourism sector or from other sectors, which bring the tourism closer to the environmental services. The other sectors could be forestry, agriculture, transport, etc. The most popular programs are the Certification for Sustainable Tourism and the Ecological Blue Flag, both managed by the Costa Rican Tourism Institute. Besides participating into programs, the tourism companies have their own environmental friendly initiatives and actions, such as recycling and using biodegradable materials. The main reasons of the companies to do an environmental effort are helping to maintain the natural resources and obtaining a green image for the company.

The programs analysed in this study mainly focus on reducing the environmental impact, providing environmental education, and compensating emissions of gases through reforestation. These programs, together with own initiatives and actions of the tourism actors are considered by tourism stakeholders as useful and somewhat efficient, although all interviewees agree that it is not enough. The study concludes with several suggestions for a better relationship between the tourism industry and the

promotion of environmental services such as; the creation of a higher awareness of the programs and initiatives in the tourism sector, a stronger enforcement of environmental laws, the establishment of a higher environmental awareness through environmental education and training, and the expansion of the existing programs toward an improvement of recycling activities and education of the tourists.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACAV	Costa Rican Association of Travel Agencies, <i>Asociación Costarricense de Agencias de Viajes</i>
ACC	Climate Change Allies Program, <i>Programa de Aliados Cambio Climático</i>
ACOPROT	Costa Rican Association of Tourism Professionals, <i>Asociación Costarricense de Profesionales en Turismo</i>
ACOT	Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators, <i>Asociación Costarricense de Operadores de Turismo</i>
ACTUAR	Costa Rican Association of Rural Tourism Community, <i>Asociación Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario</i>
AyA	Institute of Water and Sewers, <i>Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados</i>
BAE	Ecological Blue Flag, <i>Bandera Azul Ecológico</i>
CANAECO	National Chamber of Ecotourism, <i>Cámara Nacional de Ecoturismo</i>
CANATUR	National Chamber of Tourism, <i>Cámara Nacional de Turismo</i>
CCHCR	Costa Rican Chamber of Hotels, <i>Cámara Costarricense de Hoteles</i>
CST	Certification for Sustainable Tourism, <i>Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turística</i>
COOPRENA	National Tourism Cooperative, <i>Turismo Nacional y Coooperativo</i>
CSA	Certificates for Environmental Services, <i>Certificados de Servicios Ambientales</i>
ES	Environmental Services
ESPP	Environmental Services Payment Program, <i>Programa de Pago por Servicios Ambientales</i>
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FONAFIFO	National Fund for Forestry Financing, <i>Fondo Nacional de Financiamiento Forestal</i>
ICE	Costa Rican Institute of Electricity, <i>Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad</i>
ICT	Costa Rican Tourism Institute, <i>Instituto Costarricense de Turismo</i>
IDA	Agrarian Development Institute, <i>Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario</i>
MEP	Ministry of Public Education, <i>Ministerio de Educación Pública</i>
MIDEPLAN	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, <i>Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica</i>
MINAE	Ministry of the Environment and Energy, <i>Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía</i>
MINENEM	Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines , <i>Ministerio de Recursos Naturales, Energía y Minas</i>

MINSA	Ministry of Health, <i>Ministerio de Salud</i>
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SINAC	National System of Conservation Areas, <i>Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación</i>
TRC	Rural Community-Based Tourism, <i>Turismo Rural Comunitario</i>
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VET	Total Economical Value
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

Units

sq km	square kilometre
US\$	Dollar of the United States

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CHAPTER I.:

INTRODUCTION

I.1 BACKGROUND

I.1.1 Geography, population and socio-economy

Costa Rica is located in Central America, 10° north of the equator and 84° west of the prime meridian. It borders Nicaragua to the north, the Caribbean Sea to the east, Panama to the southeast, and the North Pacific Ocean to the west. The country size is 51,100 sq km and the terrain is mainly characterized by coastal plains separated by rocky mountains with over 100 volcanic cones.

Figure I-1: Map of Costa Rica



Source: Wikipedia (2010)

According to the World Bank, the total population is 4.52 million and has an annual growth of 1.3% (2008). The combination of a high education level and a stable economy and political system, attracts many foreign investors and tourism. The economy mainly depends on tourism, agriculture, and electronics exports. The total gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007 was 26.7 US\$ billions and per capita 5,887 US\$.

As said by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) less than 3% of the population lives below the US\$1.25 a day and 8.6% below the US\$2 a day poverty line (2007). In the same year, the adult literacy was 96%, the live expectancy 79 years, and the fertility rate 2.1% (UNDP and the World Bank). Compared with other Latin

American countries, Costa Rica has one of the highest living standards, the largest middle class, the best public health care system, and the best public education through the university level. The annual inflation rate was 12.4% in 2008 (the World Bank) and the country occupied 53rd rank in the human development index of the UNDP in 2006.

I.1.2 Tourism sector

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 1995) defines tourism as: *“the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”*.

According to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index of 2009, Costa Rica ranked on the 42th place of 133 countries. The most important positive factors of the country are the natural resources (6th of 133), several World Heritage sites, high amount of nationally protected areas, environmental sustainability (27th of 133), and its diverse fauna (BLANNKE and CHIESA, 2009). Moreover the area of safety and security and the infrastructure of the country remain the main concerns in the tourism sector.

Costa Rica has plenty of attractions to offer to the tourist and thus the tourist sector is very diverse. According to the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT, Instituto Costarricense de Turismo), in 2006, 74% of the tourists went to the beach, 56% observed the flora and fauna, and 54% made hikes in the country. Other popular activities were visiting volcanoes (54%), bird watching (40%), zip lines (39%), surfing (18%), visiting theatres, museum and galleries (15%), and rafting (13%) (ICT, 2007).

With a strong tourism position in the world and a high variety of touristic activities, the tourism industry is the number one foreign currency in the country. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), in 2008 the sector offered 14.5% of the country employment (WTTC, 2009) and is rapidly growing. In seven years time (2001-2008), the tourism revenues doubled and counts for 22% of all foreign currency in the country (ICT, 2009).

I.1.3 Environment

Costa Rica covers only 0.03% of the planet's surface and has approximately 5% of the world's biodiversity and therefore is listed as one of the 20 countries with the greatest biodiversity worldwide. The country has various initiatives in order to preserve their natural resources:

- According to the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN, Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica) (MIDEPLAN, 2008), 25.9% of the land area was under protection in 2007. The main categories of protected land area were: national parks (47.4%), national wildlife refuges (17.8%), forest reserves (16.3%), and protected areas (11.9%).
- Various laws enacted for the protection of the environment.
- A range of private and public initiatives.

According to the Environmental Performance Index of 2010, Costa Rica is ranked 3rd of 163 countries and is first in Central and Latin America. The index is based on ten policy categories and 25 performance indicators that cover environmental health and ecosystem vitality. These indicators determine at a national government scale of how close countries are to establish environmental policy goals. One of these goals of Costa Rica is to become the first carbon neutral country by 2021 and set an example for other institutions, companies, regions or countries. However, Costa Rica faces a host of problems, such as logging and overdevelopment due to tourism.

I.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The fame of Costa Rica is based on the quality of the landscape, the biodiversity, the natural resource and its image. During the last 20 years, the tourism sector has developed dramatically and this study tries to analyse the evolution of the sector and explains the rapid development. Another aim of the study is to give an overview of the different types of tourism and the relationship between them.

Some argues that this sector is enjoying the natural resources but is not contributing actively to the environmental services that the country has to offer, more specifically the landscape beauty. Nevertheless, tourism sector is developing strategies to maintain natural resources, to promote sustainable approach and to offset their carbon footprint. This study will analyze the different programs and actions that exist in the tourism sector which are related with the environment on international, national, regional and local level.

Moreover, it is not clear how and to what extent the environmental services have an influence in the tourism sector. Therefore, this study tries to analyse the impacts and changes in the sector due to the use of the concept of environmental services. It also seeks to examine if the tourism sector could profit from other programs of other sectors.

I.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the problematic we are asking the following research questions:

1. Who are the key tourism actors and how can they been characterized?
2. What are the different types of perceptions of the tourism actors upon the environmental services, the natural resources and the environment?
3. What are the characteristics of the strategies and actions who promote the utilization of the environmental services?
4. In what way did the concept of environmental services change those strategies and actions of the tourism actors?
5. What are the initiatives or strategies in order to improve or simplify the participation of the actors of tourism sector in the promotion of environmental services schemes?

I.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In line with the above research questions, the study has the following research objectives:

1. Identify the different touristic actors (direct and indirect) who work (directly and indirectly) in function of the environment or environmental services and their perception upon the environmental services;
2. Characterize and identify the strategies and actions who promote the utilization of the environmental services;
3. Propose better contributions to the production of environmental services.

I.5 HYPOTHESIS

Three hypotheses are formulated as follows:

1. The concept of environmental services that has been developed by academics, forestry, and ecologist sphere has only recently been integrated in tourism industry and is still poorly recognized.
2. There are various perceptions of environmental services according to the type of tourism actors.
3. On the international, national, regional, and local levels exist programs which promote the environment. The most important once are the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST, Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turística) and Ecological Blue Flag Program (BAE, Bandera Azul Ecológico).

I.6 BRIEF METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research is divided into four phases. The first phase is the literature review where secondary data was explored intensively. This data was gathered from various databases such as Web of Knowledge, Science Direct, and Scirus. The second phase is the interviews with more than a dozen institutions and organizations. Several of them gave more information such as their memberships list. The third phase is the questionnaires with almost 30 tourism companies. Through the sampling the diversity of the situation was captured. The last phase is the data analysis and description of the data gathered through the interviews and questionnaires.

I.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation is the amount of time. The research was performed in two months and therefore the amount of interviews was limited. Richer analyzes would have been made if there were more interviews with institutions and organizations, such as the Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO, Cámara Nacional de Ecoturismo), Rainforest Alliance, Ministry of the Environment and Energy (MINAE, Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía), and a wider range of questionnaires with tourism companies. The second limitation is the cooperation of some organizations. Making appointments with the tourism actors was not easy and some of the actors did not want to cooperate with the research, probably due to their low awareness of the subject. A final limitation is the restricted area of study. The study was conducted in the province of San José and the coastal towns Puerto Viejo and Cahuita. Thus the study pertains only to some parts of the country and therefore care should be taken in extending the conclusions to other situations.

I.8 STRUCTURE

The thesis is outlined in five main chapters. The first chapter starts with introducing the tourism sector in general and a background of the natural environment in Costa Rica. Also included are a problem statement, research questions, research objectives and hypothesis. The chapter ends with few limitations of the study. In the second chapter, a review of the tourism sector, the different types of tourism and the concept of environmental services are presented. The third chapter mainly focused on methodological issues such as the study area, sampling criteria, analytical tools and techniques. Based on the knowledge gained from review of literature and primary data, results and discussions are presented in the fourth chapter. The final chapter ends with some conclusions, followed by several recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the findings and understandings of past research studies performed by various specialists. Together with their views and opinions, their work contributes to the present research study to use significant information and form a sound reasoning and strong interpretation.

II.1 TOURISM SECTOR IN COSTA RICA

II.1.1 Tourism development

II.1.1.1 Stages of development

With the creation of the Costa Rican Tourism Institute in 1955, tourist activity started in Costa Rica. By focusing on the demand of inbound tourism and encouraging the supply of services, they promoted and enhanced the tourism activities. Five years later, through the enactment of the Law of the Tourism Industry, the tourism entrepreneurs were excused of the import tax on the required building materials, equipment and supplies that couldn't be found in the country. Although the institutional framework was established in the sixties, the touristic breakthrough came in the early to mid-eighties. Then, the tourism industry became very important in the economic and sustainable development of the country. During the years, there are various stages that can be identified in order to illustrate the development of the sector (HEIN and FÜRST, 2002 and HERRERA, 2009:12).

1. During the first stage (1981-1982), the tourism activity expanded rapidly and the growth rate of the foreign currency reached over a 100%. This stage was characterized by the big influence of Central American tourists.
2. Throughout the following four years (1982-1986), the tourism income, in particular from Central Americans, decreased and therefore, the Law of Incentives for Tourism Development was enacted in 1985. This law tried to establish a dynamic and competitive tourism sector and alongside other export sectors to deal with the foreign exchange and employment problems facing the country.
3. In the period of 1987 to 1991, there was a rapid increase of incoming tourists and foreign exchange, which resulted in an increase in the average expenditure per tourist. Moreover, there was a rapid growth of tourism supply, due to the enactment of the Law of Incentives for Tourism Development.
4. The fourth stage (1992-1995) was marked by a moderate and steady growth of income of tourists and generation of foreign exchange. There was also a significant growth in the infrastructure in order to meet the demands of the tourists.
5. In the beginning of next two year (1996-1998), there was a decline in the number of tourists and the amount of revenues generated. This fallback highlighted some

- weaknesses of the sector and was corrected by introducing the Certification for Sustainable Tourism in 1997 and promoting Costa Rica as a green destination.
6. From 1999 to 2000, the tourism industry was recovering and in December 1999 Costa Rica received one million foreign tourists. In 2000, there was boom of investments in new tourism projects of large beach and sun resorts, improvements in the road infrastructure, and in tourist security.
 7. During the last stage (2001- present), the international tourist activity was hit several times by world circumstances and therefore also has an effect on the tourism in Costa Rica. In 2001 due to the attacks on the Twin Towers on the 11th of September and in 2003 because of the SARS virus and the war with Iraq. The last decrease was related to the financial crisis of 2007-2010.

Figure II-1: Arrival of international tourists in Costa Rica 1988-2008



Source: Adapted from ICT, 1998; ICT, 2001 and ICT, 2009

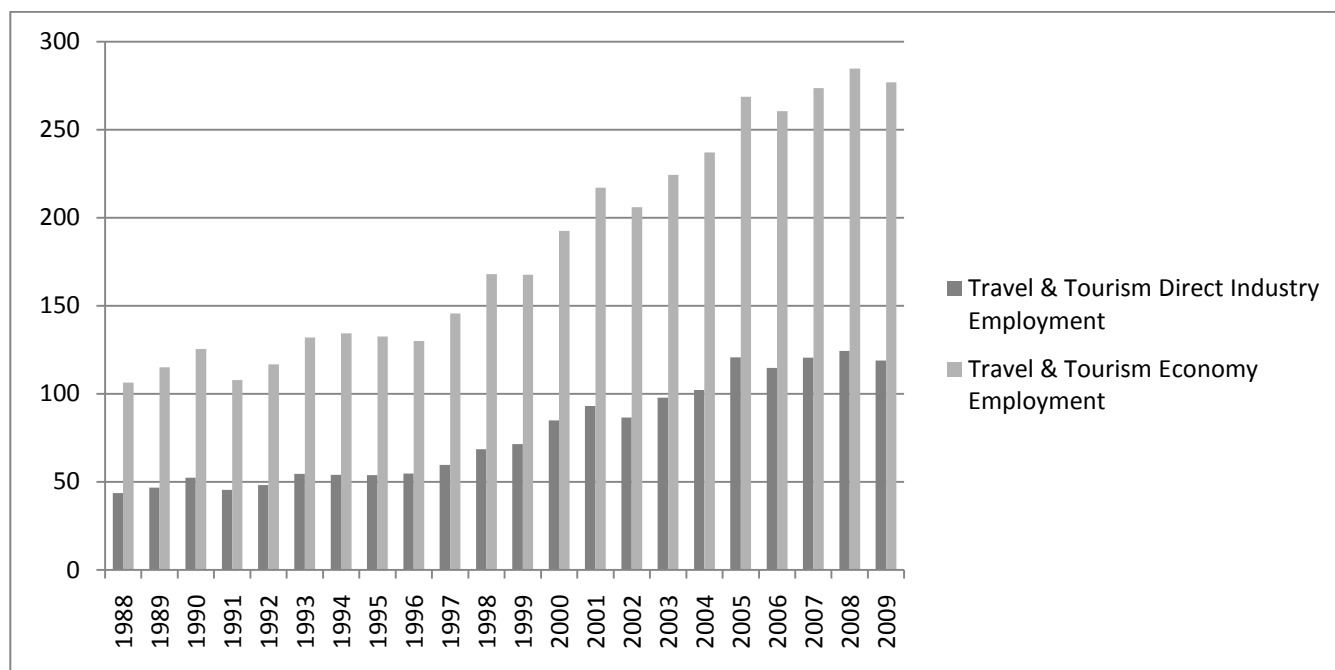
In Figure II-1, the different stages can be seen, together with the number of tourists and the annual increase of tourists in percentages. During the last 20 years (1988-2008), the average increase of international tourists coming to Costa Rica is 10% and there are multiple reasons why the tourism activity in Costa Rica has expanded rapidly. The most significant are the following: the global acknowledgement that Costa Rica has 5% of the world's biodiversity, the natural environment, the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize (1987) to the former president Oscar Arias, the

participation of Costa Rica in the Soccer World Cup in Italy in 1990, the peace in Central America, the conservation model & management of the protected areas, the kindness of the people, the tranquillity, and finally the geographical advantage of being close to the largest tourism market in the world: the United States of America. It's a combination of all the factors that makes Costa Rica an attractive destination for tourism (ACUÑA and RUIZ, 2000:95).

As noticed through the different stages of tourism development, the sector is very sensible to economic and political changes on national and international level. A possible explication is that tourism is a luxury good. If the economy goes down, people tend to spend less money on tourism and when the economy gets stronger, tourism will become stronger too.

II.1.1.2 Development in economic terms

Between 1987 and 2008 the tourism sector has developed momentarily and nowadays has a strong impact on the economic and social development of the country. In 1987, tourism accounted for 3% of the GDP while by 2008 this ratio increased to 7.2% (ICT, 2009). In 1993, the tourism sector started generating more foreign exchange than any other economic activity, beating the banana as the main export product. In 2008 the income generated from the tourism sector is estimated at 2,160.60 million US\$. According to the WTTC, the travel and tourism sector offered 14.5% of the country's employment in 2007 (WTTC, 2009). The expectations for 2009 are lower than the past years due to the financial crisis, see on the following figure and table. (WTTC, 2010 and ICT, 2009).

Figure II-2: Travel & Tourism Employment ('000 jobs)

Source: Adapted from the database of WTTC

Table II-1: Revenue from tourism versus other sources of income of foreign exchange for Costa Rica. 2001-2008

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
International arrivals of tourists in Costa Rica	1,131,406	1,113,359	1,237,948	1,452,926	1,679,051	1,725,261	1,979,789	2,089,174
Exports of traditional products (US\$ million)	728.6	689.8	793.9	801.1	769.4	915.1	1,001.7	1,059.3
Coffee (US\$ million)	161.8	165.1	193.6	197.6	232.7	225.8	251.9	305.0
Bananas (US\$ million)	505.8	477.5	553.1	543.4	481.2	620.3	673.0	689.2
Pineapple (US\$ million)	133.8	156.2	198.5	256.2	324.7	432.8	484.9	572.9
Pharmaceutical products (US\$ million)	81.0	90.1	103.0	110.0	103.2	113.8	120.0	125.7
Tourism (US\$ million)	1,113.4	1,099.2	1,225.6	1,390.3	1,599.0	1,634.7	1,941.5	2,160.6
Total exports (US\$ million)	5,021.4	5,263.5	6,102.2	6,301.5	7,026.4	8,207.3	9,352.7	9,503.7
GDP (US\$ million)	16,403.6	16,844.4	17,517.7	18,595.6	19,961.0	22,528.7	26,267.3	29,834.5
Relation tourism/GDP (%)	6.8	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	7.3	7.4	7.2
Relation tourism/exports (%)	22.2	20.9	20.1	22.1	22.8	19.9	20.8	22.7

Source: Adapted from ICT, 2009

The tourism industry is the number one foreign currency earner thanks to a constant investment policy and the approval of taxes in order to attract, strengthen and develop foreign and national businesses. According to the Costa Rican Tourism Institute there were 2,089,174 international tourist coming to Costa Rica in 2008 (ICT, 2009) and almost half of them were North Americans, see Table II-2.

Table II-2: International tourists in Costa Rica (2008)

North America	976,561	46.7%
Central America	648,586	31.0%
Caribbean	15,289	0.7%
South America	114,111	5.5%
Europe	289,379	13.9%
Asia - Middle East	29,989	1.4%
Africa	1,852	0.1%
Other zones	8,627	0.4%
Not indicated	4,780	0.2%
Total	2,089,174	100.0%

Source: Adapted from ICT, 2009

II.1.1.3 Phases of development

Throughout the years, the tourism can be characterized in three main phases and each phase is linked with a segment of the market and the perception of the destination market. Figure II-3, shows the evolution from the pioneer to the maturity phase.

Figure II-3: Phases of Development of Tourism in Costa Rica.

	1980's	1990's (beginning)	End of 90's till 2010	2010 and beyond
Phase of development	Pioneer	Growth	Evolution	Maturity
Segment of the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academia (investigators, students, etc.) - Tourists with strong nature-related interests, satisfied with basic amenities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourists with moderate interest in ecotourism, not so tolerant to lack of "creature comforts". - General interests with nature experience. - Sun/surf with nature experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun/surf with moderate/adventure activities. - MICE tourism (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) with nature experience. - Inter-cultural tourism with nature experience. 	
Perception of destination market	Hard-core ecotourism.	Moderate ecotourism.	Multi-phased tourism with strong interest in nature.	Clean, green and peaceful destination.

Source: ZAMORA and OBANDO, 2001

II.1.2 Classification of tourism

Currently, there is no consensus on the classification of tourism on international level. The meaning and use of the different types varies around the world and brings a lot of confusion and disagreements. One of the classifications on international level is from The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and consists of eight different categories, see Table II-3.

Table II-3: Categories of tourism.

Category	Definition
Adventure tourism	A form of nature-based tourism that incorporates an element of risk, higher levels of physical exertion, and the need for specialized skill.
Ecotourism	Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.
Geo-tourism	Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place-its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.
Mass tourism	Large-scale tourism that is typically associated with 'sea, sand, and sun' resorts and characteristics such as transnational ownership, minimal direct economic benefit to destination communities, seasonality, and package tours.
Nature-based tourism	Any form of tourism that relies primarily on the natural environment for its attractions or settings.
Pro-poor tourism	Tourism that results in increased net benefit for the poor people.
Responsible tourism	Tourism that maximizes the benefits to local communities, minimizes negative social or environmental impacts, and helps local people conserve fragile cultures, habitats, and species.
Sustainable tourism	Tourism that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future.

Source: Adapted from TIES, 2006.

Neither on national level there is a comprehensible classification. The Costa Rican Tourism Institute categorizes the tourist according to their activities, seen on Table II-4, or into three main groups, seen on Table II-5.

Table II-4: Distribution of travellers according to activities (%)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	Average	% change over 4 years
Sun and beach	81.5	82.4	78.2	73.9	78.3	-9.3
Observation of flora and fauna	57.3	56.2	62.3	56.3	58.7	-1.7
Hiking	60.8	52.4	62.6	53.3	57.8	-12.3
Visit to volcanoes	59.9	48.5	51.1	54.5	54.5	-9.0
Bird observation	44.6	42.6	53.3	40.5	45.6	-9.2
Canopy	38.9	35.3	40.3	39.4	37.5	1.3
Surf	25.2	27.0	19.1	17.5	21.1	-30.6
Visit theatre, museum, galleries	22.9	15.6	20.1	15.0	19.3	-34.5
Snorkel	20.8	19.8	22.3	4.4	17.1	-78.8
Rafting	13.1	12.1	11.2	13.1	12.3	0.0
Fishing	10.3	11.2	10.6	6.0	10.4	-41.7
Sea-kayak	7.1	8.4	7.5	6.8	7.5	-4.2
Diving	5.6	8.0	4.7	4.4	5.7	-21.4
Bungee jumping	1.4	2.4	1.2	0.7	1.4	-50.0
Windsurfing	0.4	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.0

Source: Adapted from ICT, 2007.

Table II-4 shows that a wide range of activities is one of the main characteristics of the tourism sector in Costa Rica. Sun and beach is the most popular (78%) and the activities mostly associated with ecotourism (observation of flora and fauna, hiking, visit to volcanoes, and bird observation) attract more than 40% of the tourists. In addition there are new opportunities, such as canopy and welfare (hot springs, massages, relaxation, etc...) (ICT, 2007).

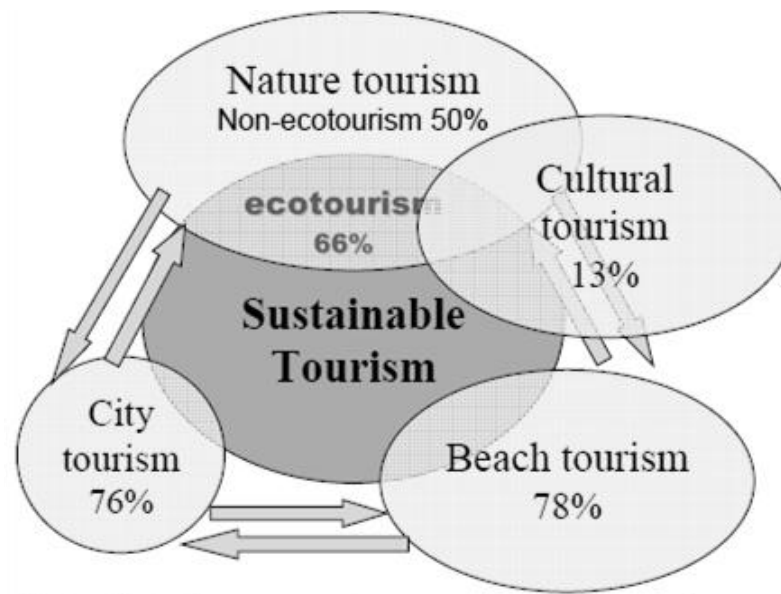
Table II-5: Classification of tourism according to the ICT

Nature	Adventure and risks	Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Beaches •Islands •Volcanoes •National parks •Wildlife Reserves •Biological Reservations •Bird Watching •Butterflies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rapid •Sailing •Fishing •Diving •Horsback riding •Water sports •Jungle walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ecotourism •Handicrafts •City tours •Archeology •Banana plantation •Coffee plantation •Folklore

Source: Adapted from SÁNCHEZ et al., 1996.

In order to limit the scope of the study, only the mayor types of tourism in Costa Rica will be presented. These types are mass, sustainable, eco-, and Rural Community-based Tourism (TRC, Turismo Rural Comunitario). In Figure II-4, illustrates the tourism pattern in Costa Rica. Note that the percentages add up to much more than 100% because visitors mostly do several different types of activities during their holidays.

Figure II-4: Patterns of tourism in Costa Rica



Source: AMOS, 2008.

II.1.2.1 Mass tourism

According to Synergy, *“mass tourism is a term commonly but loosely used to refer to popular forms of leisure tourism pioneered in southern Europe, the Caribbean, and North America in the 1960's and 1970's. It involves the movement of a large number of people on nominally standardized packaged tour holidays to resorts and on cruise ships”* (SYNERGY, 2000:8).

Tourism can have a positive contribution to a country, however it can also be damaging for the local environment and culture when the tourism development is not controlled properly. Mass tourism is frequently associated with several threats which can be divided into three categories: economic, social, and environmental (MERCHANT, 2008).

Economically, tourism can be very attractive because its ability to earn foreign exchange, although this benefit could be undermined by the economic leakages. These leakages refer to the income that goes to the head office, often in another country, of

the multinational corporations instead of contributing to the local economy. This frequently occurs in mass tourism due to the scale of the activity and high investment costs. Therefore it is difficult for the local businesses to start a tourism company because they may not have the capital or the know-how. Mass tourism can also increase the vulnerability of the region due to the high dependency on tourism for employment and foreign currency.

Socially, tourism can bring disruptions on the society such as imitation of the behaviour of the tourists. This can evolve in a local desire for a “Westernized” lifestyle and an increase of imported luxury goods. As a result, the local economy decreases. Tourism can also be linked with an increase in prostitution, crime and drug trade.

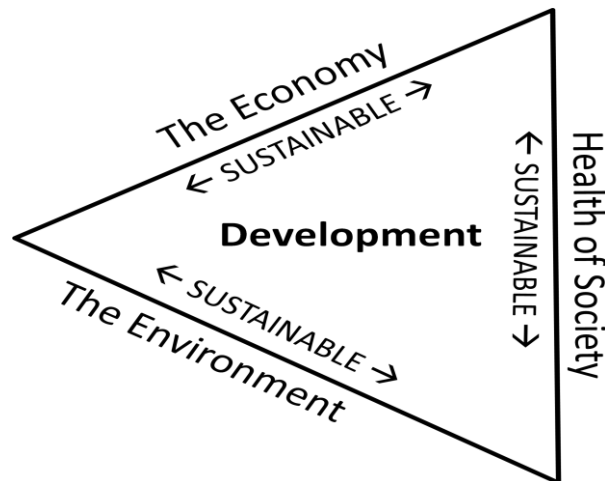
Environmentally, tourism could have several negative impacts, such as air contamination from increased transportation, destruction of the habitat and biodiversity as roads and hotels are built, and increased solid waste and sewage from visiting tourists. As a result of those damages to the natural resources, the number of future visitors is likely to reduce.

II.1.2.2 Sustainable Tourism

As a respond on the popularization of the sustainable development in the late 1980's, a growing proportion of the tourism sector focused on sustainable tourism development. Until now, there is no worldwide definition of sustainable tourism but the most commonly used definitions are from the World Tourism Organization and Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry:

- *“Sustainable tourism is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled with maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.”* (World Tourism Organization)
- *“Sustainable tourism products are products which operate in harmony with local environment, community, and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries.”* (Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry)

The main objective of this type of tourism is to find a balance between the economic benefits, the unwanted impact on the environment, and the social activities. The triangle stresses the idea that all sides are mutually dependent and must coexist in order to promote successful long-term development, see on Figure II-5.

Figure II-5: Sustainable Development Triangle

Source: Adapted from DUHÁ BUCHSBAUM, 2004.

The ten principles of sustainable tourism are presented by Blamey and are shown in Table II-6. Those principles of sustainability can be implemented in any type of tourism (mass or specialty) and in all sectors of the tourist industry (lodging, tours, transport, etc.).

Table II-6: Principles for Sustainable Tourism

1. Using resources sustainability	The conservation and sustainable use of resources (natural, social, and cultural) is crucial and makes long-term business sense.
2. Reducing over consumption and waste	Reduction of over-consumption and waste avoids the costs of restoring long-term environmental damage and contributes to the quality of tourism.
3. Maintaining biodiversity	Maintaining and promoting natural, social, and cultural diversity is essential for long-term sustainable tourism, and creates a resilient base for the industry.
4. Integrating tourism into planning	Tourism development which is integrated into a national and local strategic planning framework and which undertakes environmental impact assessments, increase the long-term viability of tourism.
5. Supporting local economies	Tourism that supports a wide range of local economic activities and which takes environmental costs and values into account both protects these economies and avoids environmental damage.

6. Involving local communities	The full involvement of local communities in the tourism sector not only benefits them and the environment but also improves the quality of the tourism project.
7. Consulting stakeholders and the public	Consultation between the tourism industry and local community's organizations and institutions is essential if they are to work alongside each other and resolve potential conflicts of interest.
8. Training staff	Staff training which integrates sustainable tourism into work practices, along with recruitment of personnel at all levels, improves the quality of the tourism product.
9. Marketing tourism responsibly	Marketing that provides tourists with full and responsible information increases respect for the natural, social and cultural environments of destination areas and enhances customer satisfaction.
10. Undertaking research	Ongoing research and monitoring by the industry using effective data collection and analysis is essential to help solve problems and bring benefits to destinations, the industry and consumers.

Source: BLAMEY, 2001

II.1.2.3 Ecotourism

The emergence of ecotourism came because of two factors (BLAMEY, 2001). The first component was the increase of environmental awareness that came with the environmental movements during the 1970's and 1980's. The second component was the dissatisfaction of mass tourism. This discontent was the result of the overdevelopment, the environmental pollution, and the invasion of culturally insensitive and economically disruptive foreigners. Blamey also divides the characteristics of ecotourism into four pillars: minimizing environmental impacts, respecting host cultures, maximizing benefits to local people and maximizing tourist satisfaction (BLAMEY, 2001).

Until now there is no clear definition of ecotourism and M. Honey states that the term ecotourism is used to describe anything related to nature or unrelated to conventional tourism (HONEY, 2008). Other experts divide ecotourism into different types: such as "hard" versus "soft", "deep" vs. "shallow" or "active" vs. "passive" ecotourism (STERN et al., 2003:323). In general one can say that ecotourism is based on nature travel and applies the principles of sustainability. The International

Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “*responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people*”. Based on this definition, Honey describes seven characteristics of ecotourism (HONEY, 2008).

1. Involves travel to natural destinations;
2. Minimizes impact;
3. Builds environmental awareness;
4. Provides direct financial benefits for conservation;
5. Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people;
6. Respects local culture;
7. Supports human rights and democratic movements.

Ecotourism is a fast growing business worldwide and many developing countries include ecotourism in their economic development and conservation strategies. They embrace ecotourism because it is an effective tool for social development (STERN et al., 2003:322). Nevertheless there are some issues related to ecotourism, such as practices as green washing (business present themselves as ‘ecological’ or ‘sustainable’ even though they don’t fulfil the generally accepted standards), mismanaged or poorly planned projects, and lack of education. One way of deciding when a business is practicing ecotourism is through a certification.

II.1.2.4 Rural Community-Based Tourism

During the 1990’s, TRC fulfilled the need of diversifying the income of the country side families by generating economic alternatives. Those activities are planned by the community organizations and local people. In that way they manage and derive benefits from doing so. This type of tourism is attractive for national and international tourists because of the combination of natural resources, daily life in the rural communities and agricultural activities. The ICT and the Alliance for the Enhancing of the Rural Community-Based Tourism, defines in 2005 rural community-based tourism as a “*consists of planned touristic experiences which are integrated sustainably with the rural environment and developed by local citizen organizations for the benefit of the community*”.

The Costa Rican Board (2010) defines the characteristics of TRC as the following:

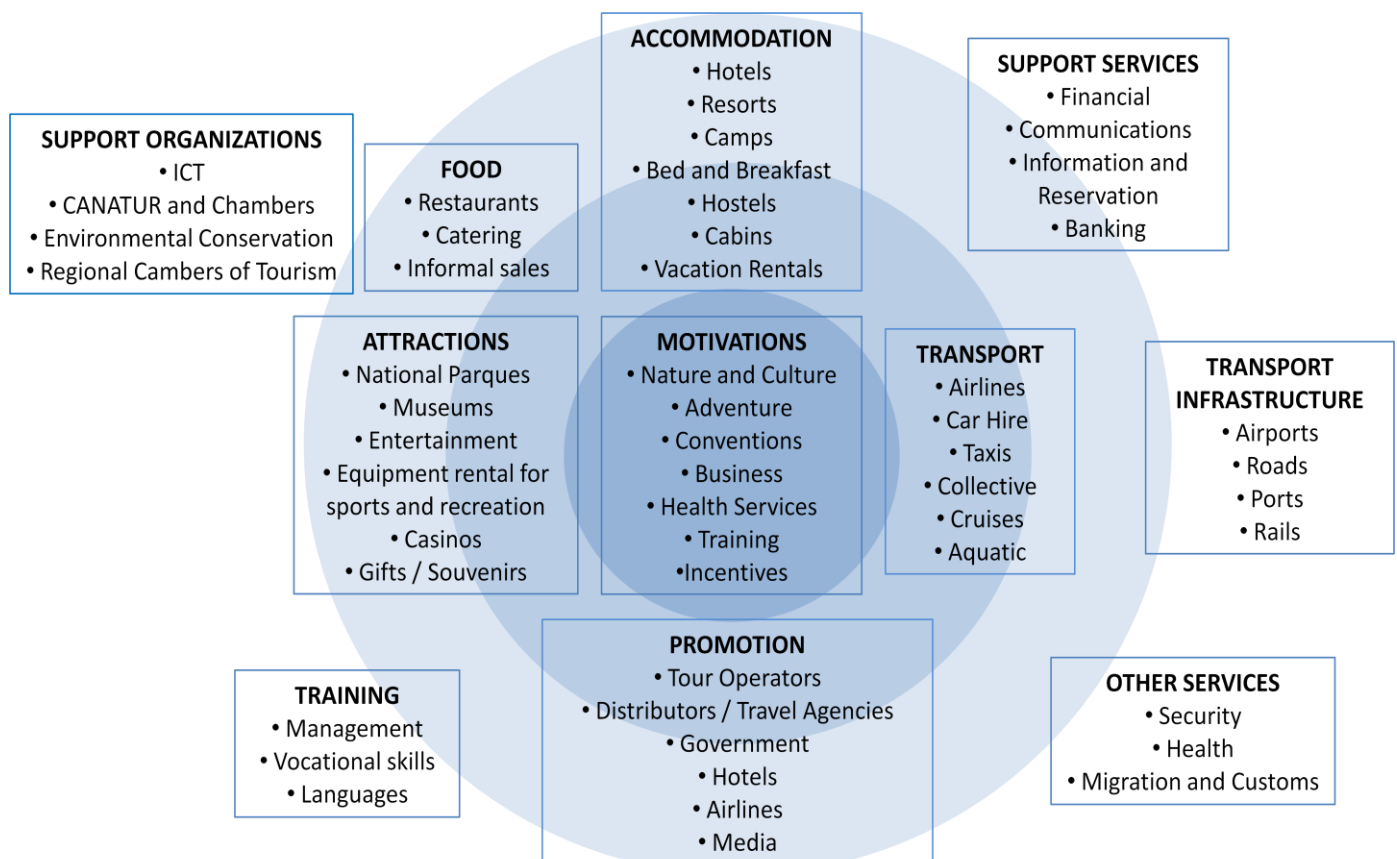
- Integrates natural resources and the daily life of the rural communities.
- Promotes and integrates sustainable practices within its tourism offerings.

- Adapts itself to the dynamics of rural life and preserves the “rurality” and the welcoming, relaxed, rustic atmosphere that characterize the rural areas of the country.
- Is maintained by local initiative and participation, and strengthens local organizations, which are made up of various families or of the community as a whole.
- Integrates the local populace in this economic activity, distributes the benefits equally, and supplements farming income.
- Promotes land ownership by the local population.

II.1.3 Workings of the tourism sector

The tourism industry is more than just the most visible parts. Other tourism related industries such as the transport, food, attractions, promotion, other services, and training should be included when talking about the tourism sector. Figure II-6 gives an overview of all the actors that are related with tourism to give an idea of the complexity. Further in this topic, the different actors in the tourism sector will be discussed.

Figure II-6: Cluster of Tourism



Source: Adapted from SÁNCHEZ et al., 1996.

II.1.3.1 The State

The Costa Rican government strongly supports the sustainable development of the tourism sector and receives plenty of recognition and positive support from the international community for doing so. Although, according to Honey, they have fallen short by financially promoting foreign-owned resorts, mass tourism development and private parks rather than focusing on the development of national parks and smaller locally owned projects. They justified this approach because they were in need for foreign currency and the high levels of public debt (HONEY, 1999:7). During the last years the governmental approach changed by formulating various laws in order to strengthen national and rural community-based tourism. And overview of the main laws in Costa Rica related with the tourism sector is shown in Table II-7.

Table II-7: Overview of tourism related laws and decrees in Costa Rica

Law or Decree	Subject
Law No.1917. Organic Law of the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (1955)	Creates the Costa Rican Tourism Institute to carry out development plans for tourist trade, construction of hotels, and circulation of propaganda abroad.
Law No. 2706. Law of the Tourism Industry (1960)	Declares the tourism industry as public and imposes a tourism tax in favour for the Costa Rican Tourism Institute.
Law No. 6043. Law on the Maritime Zone (1977)	Describes the maritime zone, public area, functions of ICT, duties of the city, penalties, and several special cases.
Law No. 6990. Law of Incentives for Tourism Development (1985)	Establishes an accelerated development process of the tourist activity and incentives that are granted as a stimulus for the realization of important programs and projects for such activities.
Law No. 16389. Law to Encourage Corporate Social Responsibility in Tourism (2006)	Regulates the implementation of corporate social responsibility in the tourism sector.
Law No. 16879. Law on the Promotion of Rural Community Tourism (2007)	Aims to promote TRC through the promotion of family-based enterprises and community in a way that the inhabitants participate in the planning, development, and utilization of the resources in a sustainable manner, to enable them to have better living conditions.
Law No. 16752. Law for Strengthening the Development of National Tourism Industry (2007)	Aims to update the old sources of funding for ICT, adapts to new needs that currently requires activity, and ensures that such income is spent specifically on promoting the tourism industry.
Decree No. 34046-MP-MEIC-TUR. Amendments to the Tourism Companies and Activities Regulation (2007)	Modifies the tourism declaratory of the ICT.
Law No. 17163. General Law of Tourism (2008)	Adjusts, adds and repeals several articles of law No.1917 and law No. 6990.
Decree No. 34717-MEIC-TUR. Reform of the Regulation of the Tourist Accommodation Business (2008)	Defines and includes the rural tourism lodges modality.
Law No. 8724. Law on the Promotion of Rural Community Tourism (2009)	Promotes the TRC through the support of family-based enterprises and communities, and seeks to manage their development.

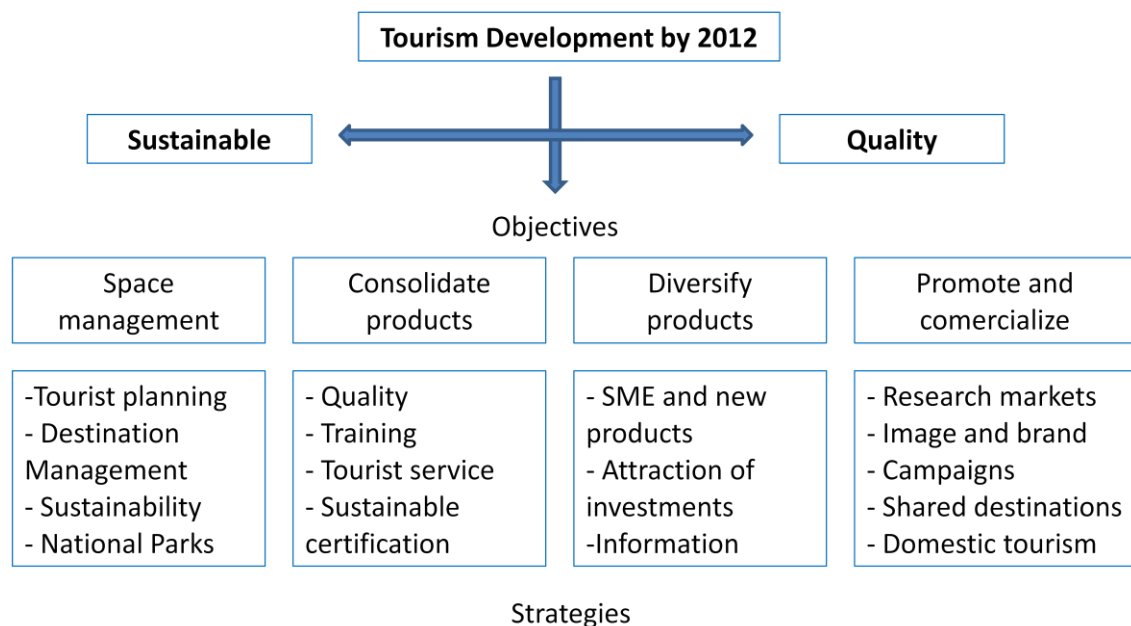
Source: The Author

II.1.3.2 Costa Rican Tourism Institute

In 1931, the first regulating tourism activity was decreed by Law 91 and in the same year the National Tourism Institute was established. They operated till 1995 and were followed up by the ICT, by means of Law 1917. As written in the National Plan of Tourism Development (ICT, 2007) the mission of the ICT is to *“promote a wholesome tourism development, with the purpose of improving Costa Ricans' quality of life, by maintaining a balance between the economic and social boundaries, environmental protection, culture, and facilities”*. The institution aims to make the Costa Rican tourism industry more competitive and to keep a share in the international tourism market. ICT wants to reach that goal through strengthening the tourism activity and consolidate tourism as the main country's sustainable economic activity. The main activities of the ICT are to promote, coordinate (governmental and intergovernmental), protect and value heritage tourism, plan and support private enterprises, and develop areas of lower welfare in the country.

Regarding to the National Plan of Tourism Development in Costa Rica (2002-2012, actualized in 2006) the objective is *“the growth of tourism, based on differentiation and product diversification using the natural image of the country”* (ICT, 2007). As seen on Figure II-7, sustainability and quality are the two axes that are part of the tourism vision. The objectives identify the aim towards which resources should be directed and the efforts to implement the vision and goals. The strategies guide the management process to achieve the goals in short, medium, or long term.

Figure II-7: Strategic framework for development



Source: Adapted from ICT, 2007.

Of all strategies, presented in Figure II-7, the three most related with the study are sustainability, national parks, and sustainable certification. The purpose of promoting a sustainable tourism is to manage and operate the tourism sector in a balanced manner in economic, social, and environmental context. Therefore, sustainability should not be seen as a niche in the market but rather as the key in offering sustainability as an attribute of Costa Rica and in enriching the experience and expectations of the tourists. There are seven actions proposed in order to develop a sustainable tourism:

1. Establish training programs in municipalities and chambers of tourism related to waste management, recycling, energy conservation, biodiversity, etc...
2. Promote the incorporation of sustainable practices in the regional and local public investments plans, with the participation of the municipalities.
3. Establish a program and awareness at national level (in companies, municipalities, schools, etc.) regarding sustainability, environmental education, and personal commitment.
4. Encourage projects that support the sustainability principles.
5. Strengthen and give attention to the Ecological Blue Flag program.
6. Promote programs to monitor and prevent the development of social problems associated with tourism.
7. Encourage the adoption of the Code of Ethics.

The strategy of the national parks aims to develop a high quality tourism product and to increase the level of visitors. There are four actions to be followed in order to reach the goal.

1. Support the development of tourism plans in the national parks.
2. Increase the investments in order to improve the conditions of the infrastructure and services within the national parks.
3. Encourage the development of tourism products in the private sector.
4. Promote the image of the parks as part of the touristic image of the country.

The strategy of sustainable certification seeks to strengthen the CST as a tool for promoting sustainability and CST is considered to be a key element to differentiate the national tourism industry. The actions are:

1. Promote the development of the CST program in other subsectors of the tourism industry.
2. Increase the number of participating companies by improving the program and the capacity of evaluation and certification.

3. Develop communication campaigns aimed at tourists and entrepreneurs.
4. Strengthen the presence of the private sector in the program management.
5. Enhance the promotion and knowledge of the program on national and international level.
6. Promote, together with the private sector, a reliable certification for ecotourism products, based on the CST program.

II.1.3.3 Chambers and associations

This paragraph presents an overview of the main actors involved in the representation of the different type of enterprises of the sector or to defend different type of tourism: the chambers and the associations associated with the tourism sector.

Costa Rican Chamber of Hotels (CCHCR)

In 1940, the Costa Rican Hotel Association was founded due to the high increase of tourism in the country. In 1995, the name was transformed to the Costa Rican Chamber of Hotels (Cámara Costarricense de Hoteles) and nowadays brings together more than 300 hosting companies, such as hotels, vacation rentals, cabin, lodges, inns and others. They aim to strengthen the hotel sector and therefore make the industry more competitive and meeting the needs of the market.

National Tourism Cooperative (COOPRENA)

COOPRENA (Turismo Nacional y Coooperativo) is a cooperative established in 1944 by a small group of peasant cooperatives who saw tourism as an opportunity to generate additional income and to contribute to community development. Currently, the cooperative has over 20 members and is the leader in rural community-based tourism. Their mission is to offer excellent services to its members through the organization of business networks committed to principles and values of solidarity, in order to promote sustainable development and improve quality of life of its partnership base.

National Chamber of Tourism (CANATUR)

CANATUR (Cámara Nacional de Turismo) was created in 1974 as a non-profit umbrella organization that represents the private tourism sector of Costa Rica. The chamber has over 600 members and their main objective is to defend the interests of its members by ensuring participation in various national and international organizations, linking to all business actors and associations in the tourism industry, in the interest of having a voice in its full representation.

Costa Rican Association of Tourism Professionals (ACOPROT)

In 1982, ACOPROT (Asociación Costarricense de Profesionales en Turismo) was founded as a private non-profit organization that brings together professionals who have a university degree in tourism, or equivalent, and are working in the tourism industry. Nowadays, the association counts over 1,000 members and aims for the following: integrating a group of professionals who defend the interests of their partners, obtaining a refinement of professional members, strengthening the tourism market through promotion, and revealing techniques and trends of international tourism in order to promote tourism development.

Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators (ACOT)

ACOT (Asociación Costarricense de Operadores de Turismo) was established in 1989 and is a private, non-profit organization that unites the most qualified tour operators in the country. Currently, ACOT represents 39 tour operators and aims to promote and develop the business of the tour operators. More specifically, their goals are to improve social, cultural, educational, organizational and productive management of their members, to promote mutual help among its members, and to gather and involve the different sectors of the tourism industry in order to promote domestic tourism.

Costa Rican Association of Rural Tourism Community (ACTUAR)

In 2001, ACTUAR (Asociación Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario) was created as a network specialized in rural community tourism and as a tour operator. The association is affiliated with more than 50 community-based rural tourism initiatives and represents various initiatives such as: environmental and conservation organizations, activities to diversify products, women organizations, and indigenous territories. Their purpose is to promote the environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability of community-based rural tourism initiatives in Costa Rica, through strategic alliances to sell community-based tourism, strengthen the capacity of our members and the management of resources.

National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO)

In 2003, the first National Chamber specified in the needs of the ecotourism sector in Central America was founded: CANAECO. The Chamber is a private, non-profit organization that unites natural and legal persons linked to the ecotourism sector in Costa Rica. Their mission is to be a chamber that encourages socio-economic

development of the country through sustainable practices in the tourism sector while treasuring and protecting the natural and cultural heritage.

II.1.3.4 Tourism offer

During the last ten years the tourism industry increased significant in number of gastronomic and entertainment, lodging companies and travel agencies. The markets of car rentals and water transport have reduced in number of businesses and been concentrated. This is data is based on all licensed business in Costa Rica.

Table II-8: Tourism offer 1998-2008

Business type	1998	2003	2008	1998-2008
Lodging companies	350	434	518	32.4%
Travel agencies	270	295	352	23.3%
Rental car	66	39	25	-164.0%
Water transport	80	77	38	-110.5%
Gastronomic and entertainment	191	302	492	61.2%
Airlines		23	28	17.9%
Total	957	1,147	1,467	34.8%

Source: Adapted from ICT, 1999; ICT, 2004 and ICT, 2009.

II.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

II.2.1 Definition and classification of environmental services

Regarding to the aim of the study, there are two types of environmental services that are linked with the tourism sector (NACIONES UNIDAS, 2004).

- *Ecological environmental services*: services that are derived from the nature and are positively used in the tourism sector. According to the ICT, the major types of tourism are sun & beach and the observation of flora & fauna, see on Table II-4. It is obvious to say that those types of tourism are closely linked with the ecological environmental services that Costa Rica has to offer. This type of services can be valued with method of Total Economical Value (VET), which is discussed in topic II.2.2.
- *Human environmental services*: services that are a result of the conservation, management, cleaning and waste management caused by human activities on the environment.

Up till now there is no consensus on the classification of the environmental services and therefore the process of classification is presented. In 1991, the World Trade Organization approved the environmental services and categorized them into four types; sewage services, refuse disposal services, sanitation and similar series, and others. This classification is exemplified in the “Services Sectoral Classification List (W/120)”. In February 2010 the World Trade Organization held a workshop on the Environmental Goods and Services for Developing Country Members and proposed a new classification for the environmental services;

1. Water for human use & wastewater management.
2. Solid/hazardous waste management.
3. Protection of ambient air and climate.
4. Remediation and cleanup of soil & water.
5. Noise & vibration abatement.
6. Protection of biodiversity and landscape.
7. Other environmental & ancillary services.

There is no consensus yet on the modifications in the W/120, but the new classification is used by those members who are interested in doing so (NACIONES UNIDAS, 2004).

In some of the Central American countries, the environmental services are defined as functions that protect and improve the environment through:

1. Mitigation of gases produced by the greenhouse effect (fixation, reduction, sequestration, storage and absorption).
2. Protection of water for urban, rural or hydroelectric purposes.
3. Protection of biodiversity for conservation and sustainable use, scientific and pharmaceutical research and breeding, as well as for the protection of ecosystems and life forms.
4. Natural scenic beauty for tourism and scientific use.

This definition is also used in Costa Rica and approved by the National Fund for Forestry Financing (FONAFIFO, Fondo Nacional de Financiamiento Forestal). See later in topic II.3.4.

II.2.2 Evolution of the environmental situation

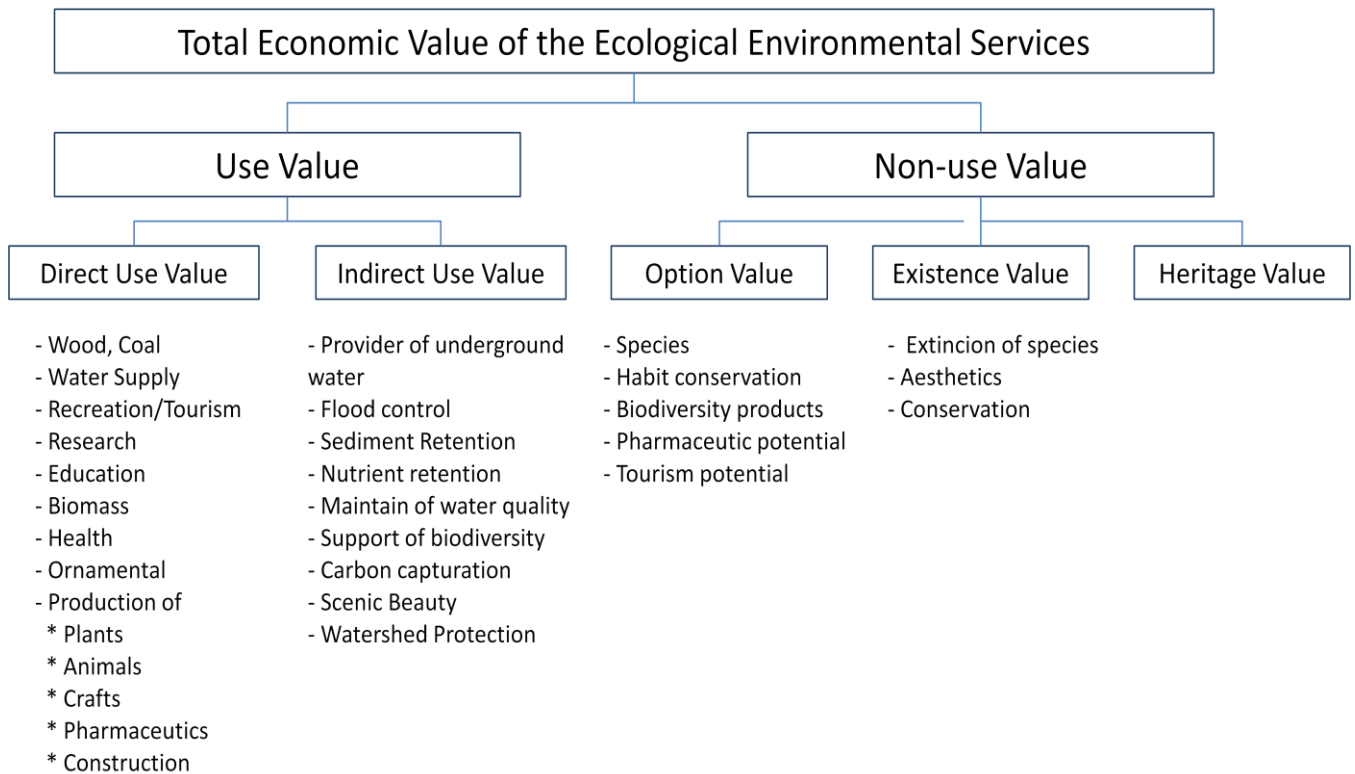
In 1955, the first national park of Costa Rica was created: the national park of volcano Poás. During the sixties and seventies, Costa Rica was known as having one of the world's highest deforestation rates. In order to reverse that movement, the country did an effort to conserve and protect its natural environment. In 1979, the First Forest Act N° 4465 "First generation of incentives" was created and promoted the plantations through tax reductions for investments in reforestation. The Second Forest Act "Second generation of incentives", in 1986, focused on two initiatives; the Forest Credit Certificate and the Forest Credit Certificate Advance. The Forest Credit Certificate is an incentive for large timber plantations to stem the decline in supplies of wood. In the same year, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines (MIRENEM, Ministerio de Recursos Naturales, Energía y Minas) was established. In 1990, the Forest Credit Certificate extended the program to Forest Management and they promoted the creation of the Costa Rican Chamber of Forestry. During the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was approved and two years later, Costa Rica agreed to the convention and ensured the environmental sustainability of the country. In 1995, the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC, Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación) was established and worked on uniting the parks, forestry and wildlife. In the same year, the certificate for the protection of forests was formed and helped conserving the forests in Costa Rica (CUÉLLAR, N. et al., 1999). In 1996, Costa Rica acknowledged four environmental services in the Forest Act N° 7575, see topic II.2.1, and one year later, FONAFIFO started with the Environmental Services Payment

Program (ESPP, Programa de Pago por Servicios Ambientales). The program compensates the landowners for keeping forests intact and reforesting degraded areas. The ESPP is a major advance in the global institutionalization of ecosystem investments because few other countries have such a conservation history and because much can be learned from Costa Rica's experiences. In 2007, Costa Rica started the Climate Change Program with the intention of being carbon neutral by 2021. If Costa Rica would succeed, it would be the first carbon neutral country in the world.

II.2.3 Total economic value of ecological environmental services

There are several reasons why a country should assess the environmental services related to tourism. First of all, its value should be included into the tourism activities or services and therefore also in their prices. Secondly, the assessment creates and implements measures that can contribute to the further development of the sustainable tourism. And lastly, knowing the total economical value can help during the negotiations about environmental services related to tourism and can gain advantages in the negotiations when opening a given service.

Some presume that ecological environmental services are abundant goods and services and thus don't need to be charged for their uses. However, these services are scarce and should their uses should be valued. The valuation is more than the marketable products, all dimensions of the use and non-use value should be accounted into the total economical value. Figure II-8 illustrates the VET of the ecological environmental services.

Figure II-8: Total Economic Value of the Ecological Environmental Services

Source: Adapted from NACIONES UNIDAS, 2004.

II.2.4 Influence of tourism on environmental services

II.2.4.1 Negative environmental impacts of tourism

Tourism can have an important role for change in poor countries, but when tourism isn't well developed there may be negative impacts on the environment. And as a result of these damages to the natural resources, the future number of tourist may decrease. In the consulted literature, various sorts of damages are mentioned (CHEN MOK, 2005:30 and MERCHANT, 2008). The following is a list of the most frequently stated negative impacts on the environment.

- Water contamination by inappropriate sewage and solid waste system.
- Loss of natural environment through air and water degradation.
- Damage coral reefs and forests, contaminate beaches and destroy habitats, due to the construction.
- Increasing global warming and carbon footprint caused by aeroplane flights.
- Loss of soil from deforestation or development of infrastructure.
- Change of landscape or scenic beauty with the aim of satisfying tastes and needs of the tourists.
- Access problems created by traffic, noise and environmental damage in protected areas.

II.2.4.2 Contributions of the tourism sector to environmental services

However, not all of the impacts of tourism on the environment are negative; everybody in the tourism industry can give a positive input. For example,

- Tourists contribute in preserving nature and promoting nature parks through their contribution paid at the entrances of the parks.
- Tourism companies work together with conservation activities and/or own private forest reserves who receive payments from the Environmental Services Payment Program, see topic II.3.4.1.
- Tour operators pay the local community so that they won't hunt in a forest that is being used for tourists' wildlife viewing.

However, the input of the tourism sector would be greater if those private actors would unite themselves and collectively organize an effective provision of these services at national level. Furthermore, a payment mechanism in the ESPP could be developed for those who benefit from the provision of scenic beauty and biodiversity conservation. (BIENABE, 2006:3).

II.2.5 Environmental services serves as an touristic attraction

The concept of scenic beauty includes the conservation and enjoyment of attractive landscapes such as waterfalls, rivers, lakes and all the spectacular flora and fauna. The main users of this service are the recreation sector, more specifically, the tourism industry. For example, the tour organizations sell tours to show the landscapes that the country has to offer to the tourists. In that way, they increase their income and thus benefit from the environmental services (NACIONES UNIDAS, 2004).

II.3 PROGRAMS WHICH PROMOTE THE ENVIRONMENT

II.3.1 Certification for Sustainable Tourism

The CST program was developed by the Sustainability Programs Department of the Costa Rican Tourist Board and the Costa Rica National Accreditation Commission in 1997. It is a feature that certifies that the tourist entrepreneurs are sustainable in terms of minimum impact on natural, cultural and social resources of the area where they are carrying out their activity. Initially the certificate was only for lodging companies, regardless of the number of rooms or whether the establishment obtained the tourist declaratory of the ICT. In 2005 a new certificate came out for the travel agencies and in 2010 the carriers can be certified as well. This institutional initiative has as main objective to turn the concept of sustainability into something real, practical and necessary in the context of the country's tourist competitiveness. The program is voluntary, and the UNWTO recognized the CST as a program that is working toward modifying and improving the way of carrying out tourist activity.

The projected aims are to improve the use of natural and social resources, to encourage the active involvement of the local communities, and to support the competitiveness of the business sector. The program categorizes and certifies a tourism enterprise according to his degree of sustainability. In order to evaluate the company's performance, the CST applies a scale of five levels in four categories; physical and biological environment, hotel facilities, customers, and socio-economic environment. The higher the level, the more sustainable the company is and it corresponds with the ranking the company receives.

Every two years, the company's sustainable performance is re-evaluated, free of charge for the company. In case that the minimal environmental, social and economic performance standards are not reached or lack of information, the certificate may be cancelled. A CST certified business can benefit from the marketing strategies of the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, can use the CST logo in their promotional materials, and is partly or completely discharged from registration fees to international fairs. When implementing the recommended practices of CST, they will also notice an improvement in their efficiency of their operations. Nevertheless, there are some difficulties that the program has to cope with, such as the differences in perception, hardly quantifiable outcomes, and difficulties of accountability and verifiability (TEPELUS and CÓRDOBA, 2003:140).

Nowadays there are 111 lodging companies and 33 travel agencies certified. During 2006-2009, the program had an annual growth rate of 49.5% (MIDEPLAN, 2010).

II.3.2 Ecological Blue Flag

The Ecological Blue Flag program was founded in 1996 by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, National Chamber of Tourism, the Ministry of Health (MINSA, Ministerio de Salud) and the Institute of Water and Sewers (AyA, Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados). BAE was created as a response to the danger of the polluted beaches, and its effects on the public health and tourism sector. In 2002, the program expanded its working to non-coastal communities, in 2004 to educational institutions (preschool, primary and secondary schools), and in 2006 to protected natural areas. Later, two other categories were added to the program: micro-watersheds and actions to address Climate Change. The goal of BAE is to establish an incentive to promote local organizing committees who pursue conservation and developing that is consistent with protecting the natural resources and improving hygiene and public health in Costa Rica. The Ecological Blue Flag is an award or label that rewards the effort and voluntary work and is given annually. The six types of BAE are listed in Table II-9 .

Table II-9: Types of Ecological Blue Flag

Type	# (2009)	Act
Beaches	63	31610-S-MINAE-TUR
Communities	38	31610-S-MINAE-TUR
Educational institutions	258	31648-MEP-S-TUR
Protected natural areas	24	33604-MINAE
Micro-watersheds (rivers, streams, lakes...)	3	34777-MINAE-S-MEP
Actions to address the climate change	18	34548-MINAE
* variety of mitigation (hotels, industries, institutions...)		
* variety of adaption (farms, agricultural activities...)		

Source: Adapted from MIDEPLAN, 2010:322 and V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010.

II.3.3 Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance is an international non-governmental organization based New York City and offices throughout the world. The non-governmental organization (NGO) was launched in 1987 and works to conserve biodiversity and ensure

sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behaviour. The Alliance offers six different programs; sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry, sustainable tourism, carbon verification, education program, and the eco-index, which is a database with more than 1,250 conservation projects in the Americas.

The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism program was established in 2000. The Alliance helps the tourism businesses to conserve their environment and contribute to local communities through providing training, offering marketing support, motivating sustainable practices, educating the travellers, promoting sustainability certifications, and by sharing resources and information.

II.3.4 National Fund for Forestry Financing

FONAFIFO is a semiautonomous agency with independent legal status that was established in 1990 with the enactment of the Forestry Law No. 7174 and Executive Order No. 19886-MIRENEM. Their general purpose is to fund small and medium producers, through credits or other mechanisms to promote forest management, reforestation, afforestation, forest nurseries, agro forestry systems, recovery of denuded areas, and technological changes in harvesting and industrialization of forest resources. In the following topics, the main programs of FONAFIFO are presented.

II.3.4.1 Environmental Services Payment Program

During the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), Costa Rica agreed to guarantee the country's environmental sustainability. In order to manage, conserve and sustainable develop the natural resources, the ESPP was founded in 1996. The program is a financial recognition from the state, to the forests (plantations) owners for the environmental services that they provide and thus directly affect the protection and environmental improvement of the country.

In 2000 the ESPP evolved to three main activities: timber plantations, sustainable forest management and forest conservation. Four years later an agro forestry contract and a natural regeneration contract were introduced. Thus, during the years the ESPP is moving towards a greater degree of targeting and currently there are nine different modalities, see Table II-10.

Table II-10: Amounts allocated to the ESPP in 2009

Type of modality	Payment	Duration (years)
Forest protection	US\$ 320/ha	5
Protection within protected areas	US\$ 320/ha	5
Reforestation	US\$ 980/ha	5
Agro forestry contract	US\$ 1.3/tree	3
Water resource protection	US\$ 400/ha	5
Protection of gap conservation	US\$ 375/ha	5
Natural regeneration with productive potential	US\$ 205/ha	5
Natural regeneration in pastures in Kyoto or carbon lands	US\$ 320/ha	5
Natural regeneration in pastures	US\$ 205/ha	5

Source: Costa Rica, 2009

II.3.4.2 Certificates for Environmental Services

Due to the insufficient public funds to guarantee a continued growth of the forests, FONAFIFO started in 2007 with an alternative program in order to reward the forest owners. The Certificates for Environmental Services (CSA, Certificados de Servicios Ambientales) is a financial instrument which raises funds from companies and institutions that benefit from the environmental services (ES). There are three types of certificates and all participation is voluntarily:

1. *Clean Trip (Viaje Limpio)*. Through this mechanism the people or companies that generate emissions of greenhouse gases by use of air, land, rail or sea, can counterbalance this pollution through a payment.
2. *Vital Water (Agua Vital)*. This certificate is bought by people or companies who are interested in helping to restore and protect the diversity of water sources.
3. *Living Forest (Bosque Vivo)*. The focus of this certificate is to recover forest and to protect biodiversity, water and ecosystems.

II.3.5 Climate Change Allies Program

The Climate Change Allies Program (ACC, Programa de Aliados Cambio Climático) was created in 2007 by a group of private citizens of Costa Rica and their mission is to provide all segments of society with a practical and concrete solution to global warming. In order to accomplish this goal, they reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the reforestation of native trees. The ACC is a social venture and is directed by Laura Lang, who receives a grant from the international organization Ashoka. The program promotes an environmental friendly way of living, by offering people the possibility to compensate for their greenhouse gas emissions. ACC offers four kinds of contributions in order to reforest Costa Rica and thus mitigate climate change:

1. *Eco Seal for Vehicles*, in order to compensate the average carbon dioxide emissions of a vehicle per year (US\$60 for 11 trees).
2. *Green Vacations* is developed for the tourist who wants to compensate their carbon footprint during their travels in Costa Rica (US\$10 based on a two week vacation).
3. *Give Live with a Post Card* initiative that sponsors a plant.
4. *Social Responsibility Program* is a program that allows companies to compensate for their carbon dioxide emissions.

Between 2007 and 2008 there were 181 vehicles who compensated their emissions, 56 seals sold and currently 73 companies participating. In May 2010 those contributes resulted in over 50,000 trees planted in Costa Rica and currently the ACC program is extending their network throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology used to verify the hypotheses. In order to understand the complex situation, the analytical tools and techniques are described.

III.1 SETTINGS

The study was undertaken in Costa Rica, which is known for its well developed tourism industry and strong efforts for the environment. This analysis will be used in the Ecosystem Services and Rural Land Uses project, which is a comparative study between Costa Rica, Madagascar and France. The project has as objective to identify the public action principles, mechanisms, and arrangements that enable the effective mainstreaming of the notion of ecosystem services in public policies. Most of the interviews were conducted in the province of San José since the majority of the institutions and organization, 64% of the travel agencies companies, 23% of the lodging businesses, and almost all of the carriers are located in San José (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010). In addition, several tourism companies were interviewed in the coastal towns Puerto Viejo and Cahuita. Since their tourism activities are less developed than in San José and there are mainly one-man businesses, their perceptions on tourism and environmental services were different than in San José. Therefore a richer analysis could be made.

III.2 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Various techniques were used to gather the data required for the research, such as literature review, interviews with institutions and organizations, and questionnaires with tourism companies, such as lodging companies, travel agencies, and carriers. In the following paragraphs each of them will be described briefly.

III.2.1 Literature review

In order to collect secondary data and information, existing documents and literature has been explored intensively. This technique has enabled to gather background information and to understand the workings of the tourism industry and the concept of environmental services in Costa Rica. It also helped to create an understanding in the linkage between them.

III.2.2 Interviews with institutions and organizations

More than a dozen interviews had been made in order to understand and shape an idea of the tourism sector in Costa Rica. The main actors on governmental and institutional level have been interviewed about the evolution of the tourism sector, the classification of the tourism types, the perception on the concept of environmental

services, the existing programs linked with the environment, and their personal experiences. The interviews were conducted during March 2010 and at the location of the institutions and organizations, mainly situated in or around San José. Those interviews provided an in depth analysis of their understanding of the notion of environmental services, the governance of their programs, and insights in the characteristics of the tourism sector. Appendices II and III present the interview questions and the list of interviewees.

III.2.3 Questionnaires with tourism companies.

A questionnaire has been prepared and used for individual interviews to gain a better insight in the studied topic. In total eleven lodging companies, eleven travel agencies and six carriers were interviewed in a timeframe of one month (mid March till mid April 2010). The following table gives an overview of the used questionnaire. The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix IV and the following appendix shows the list of the questionnaire participants.

Table III-1: Questionnaire design

Questionnaire parts:	Obtained information about...:
a. General information	The type, the characterization, the evolution, the objectives and the positioning in the market of the organization.
b. Perception on environment	The importance of the environmental problems and threads, their view on the ecosystems and possible actions to contribute.
c. Perception on ES	Knowledge about the concept, the classification of ES according to importance, and their way of contributing.
d. Politics, actions and programs	Their perception on the existing policies or laws, their own initiatives & participation in programs in favour of the environment, and their memberships or alliance with other organizations.
e. Prospects	Their view on the future, possible changes and other comments.

Source: The Author

III.2.4 Sampling for individual interviews

The sampling was done to capture the diversity of the situation, which was identified during the first phase of analysis; literature review and institutional & organisation interviews. Three variables of differentiation were used in order to understand the diversity of the situation. These variables are the type of business (lodging companies, travel agencies, and carriers), the size of the company (small,

medium, and big), and their level of sustainability (sustainable or not). In topic IV.1.2, the variables will be explained more profoundly.

Table III-2: Interview sample

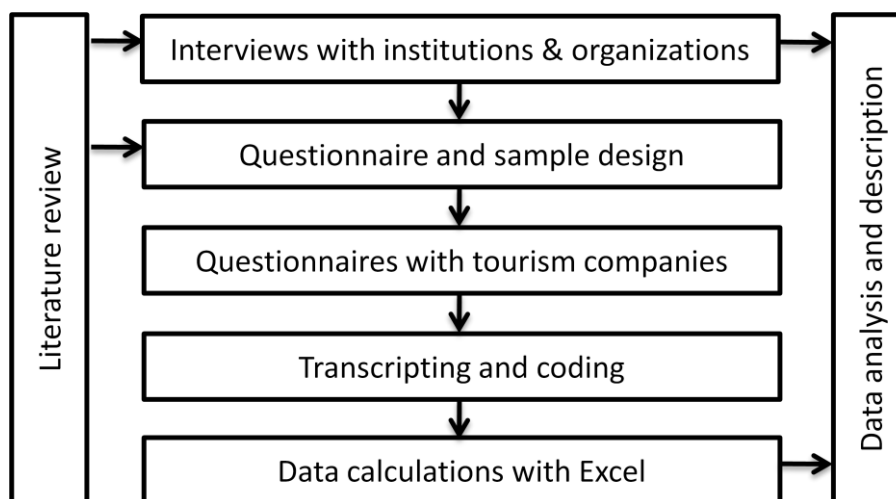
Type of business	Level of sustainability		Size			Total
	Sustainable	Not sustainable	Small	Medium	Big	
Lodging company	6	5	6	1	4	11
Travel agency	9	3	4	5	2	11
Carriers	4	2	2	2	2	6
Total	19	10	12	8	8	28

Source: The Author

III.3 ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The analysis of the study consists of two parts. The first part is the interviews with the institutions and organizations and due to the fact that the interviews were open, each interview is analyzed separately in a qualitative way. The second part is the questionnaires with tourism companies. After the questionnaire and sample design, the questionnaire was pre-tested and several adjustments were made. The questionnaire exists of different types of questions: qualitative questions, ranking according to importance, and yes or no questions. All obtained data was entered in Excel and after the transcribing and coding the answers, several statistical calculations were made. With the information gathered, the analysis was made and conclusions drawn. Figure III-1 gives an overview of the process.

Figure III-1: Process of analytical approach



Source: The Author

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter gives an overview of the results and discussion of the empirical analysis.

IV.1 TOURISM ACTORS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

IV.1.1 On institutional and organizational level

Figure IV-1 lists the key institutions and organizations of the tourism sector. From that list, the main institutions and organizations are selected and presented more profoundly; the workings of the institutions and organizations, the information of their members, and their perception on the ES.

Figure IV-1: Structure of the institutions and organizations in the tourism sector.

Costa Rican Tourism Board, ICT			
National Camber of Tourism, CANATUR			
Costa Rican Association of Tourism Professionals, ACOPROT			
Tourism type	Lodging, promotion & restaurants	Carriers	Others
National Camber of Ecotourism, CANAECO	Costa Rican Chamber of Hotels, CCHCR	Association of Airlines, ALA	Association Pro Image of Costa Rica
National Tourism Cooperative, COOPRENA	Costa Rican Association of Travel Agencies, ACAV	Association of Rent a Car Companies, ASEMA	Costa Rican Association of Tourism Guides, ACOGUITUR
Chamber of Rural Tourism, CANATURURAL	Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators, ACOT		
Costa Rican Association of Rural Tourism Community, ACTUAR	Costa Rican Chamber of Restaurants, CACORE		
Regional and local chambers			

Source: The Author

IV.1.1.1 Costa Rican Tourism Institute

The Costa Rican Tourism Institute is the national regulatory institution for the tourism and is operating under the Ministry of Tourism. It has a Board of Directors, a General Management and an Executive President, who is appointed by the Government Council 21 (ZAMORA and OBANDO, 2001). The four working divisions are: planning and development, marketing, tourism management, and financial administration. The institution is financed through state taxes and the US\$15 tourism tax that is paid by tourists through their flights out the country (A. Damaris, personal communication, March 2, 2010). The central office of ICT is located in the capital and

the regional offices, seven in total, are situated in San Carlos, Liberia, Nicoya, Puntarenas, Guápiles, Quepos, and Rio Claro.

The National Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development (2002 -2012, updated in 2006) gives an overview of dispositions guiding national tourism development and the ICT's actions for future projections (ICT, 2007). These institutional policies should be considered as mandatory and have long-term implications. The main changes in the National Plan are that Costa Rica should strengthen its sustainability and promote the voluntarily program of tourist declaratory (G. Solera Córdoba, personal communication, February 25, 2010). In the executive Decree No. 25226-MEIC-TUR, the tourist declaratory is described as *"an act by which the Tourist Board's Management declares a company or activity as tourism-related, after complying with the technical, economic and legal requirements mentioned in this regulation and respective manuals"* (Costa Rica, 1996). Each year, the tourism company can apply for a tourist declaratory and receives an amount of stars (from one to five stars), which refer to the quality of their customer services. In the executive Decree No. 25226-MEIC-TUR of 1996, there are no environmental conditions that the company has to obey. But eleven years later, in Decree No. 34046-MP-MEIC-TUR of 2007, there are several environmental regulations that the company has to follow in order to receive a tourist declaratory (Costa Rica, 2007). The majority of businesses receive only one or two stars, which indicate a low level of customer services (G. Solera Córdoba, personal communication, February 25, 2010). A. Granados, executive director of Costa Rican Association of Travel Agencies (ACAV, Asociación Costarricense de Agencias de Viajes), commented that after making the tourism declaratory voluntarily, there came a great number of small travel agencies who only operated through the internet. In order to verify the reliability of the company, one should apply for a tourist declaratory and use the ICT logo. As a result, the clients know that the business is trustworthy (Granados, personal communication, March 10, 2010).

According to G. Solera Córdoba there is no direct link between the tourism sector and the environmental services. Nevertheless, some of the tourism companies own private land and thus offer ES. The most important sustainability programs in the tourism sector are the Certification for Sustainable Tourism and the Ecological Blue Flag (G. Solera Córdoba, personal communication, February 25, 2010). A. Damaris agrees with G. Solera Córdoba and suggests several ways to improve the relationship with the environmental services. Firstly, the Environmental Services Payment Program could expand to tourism activities and to the beauty of the communities. Secondly, the

Ecological Blue Flag could enlarge the program for local communities and offer a clean technology. And lastly, the locals could make from their community a clean touristic destination (A. Damaris, personal communication, March 2, 2010).

IV.1.1.2 National Chamber of Tourism

The main representative of the private tourism sector of Costa Rica has a Board of Directors that is composed of various tourism associations. In that way the interests of the whole tourism industry are represented. The Executive Committee counts five members, with Sr. Gonzalo Vargas as president. CANATUR is financed through the membership fees and their principal office is located in San José. They are also member of a range of committees, such as the Mixed Marketing and Tourism Promotion Committee and the Security Committee.

CANATUR counts more than 800 members and they are mostly travel agencies, carriers, lodging companies, restaurants, airlines and media. The members affiliate since CANATUR is the only chamber that defends and represents the private sector to the public sector, and thus can influence the tourism policies of the government. Moreover, CANATUR increases the credibility of the company, offers training and promotions, access to information, and representation in the tourism, public and private sector.

The Director of Marketing & Events, A. Brenes, believes that the tourism industry and the environment are complementary and thus taking care of the environment is very important. The interaction between the tourism and the environmental services could be strengthened by extending the CST program and compensating trips through FONAFIFO. Furthermore, the tourism is the first who started with the action plan of the National Strategy for Climate Change. (A. Brenes, personal communication, March 16, 2010). The proposed actions in the National Strategy for Climate Change for the tourism sector are the following (MINAET, 2009):

- Encourage tourism businesses to promote the use of renewable energy sources in all its activities.
- Encourage tourism associations and media to contribute to the awareness of tourists in order to change consumer habits, to opt for a less damaging tourism form for the climate, and to compensate emissions.

IV.1.1.3 Costa Rican Association of Tourism Professionals

Besides developing the professional profile of its members and promoting Costa Rica as a tourism destination, ACOPROT also created and organizes the annually event EXPOTUR. EXPOTUR is a business gathering for the tourism industry and is considered as one of the greatest in Central and Latin America. For more than 25 years, the event gathers nearly 260 tourism companies and promotes the tourist attractions and services of Costa Rica and Central America. The international buyers mainly come from North and South America, Europe and Asia. Another strong aspect of ACOPROT is their extensive training programs. They offer a Research and Training Centre (FORMATUR), open trainings, seminars & workshops, regular courses, forums, and customized training.

From the more than 1,000 members, 60% hold a position of management in the industry. The association doesn't represent the company, but the professionals in the tourism sector.

According to Carlos Lizama, the president of ACOPROT, environmental services stands for making better use of the natural resources. The tourism sector can help protecting these resources on various levels: the businesses, the government, the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, or through travel agencies. ACOPROT contributes by owning small plantations, offering help to green providers (for example, producers of environmental friendly products such as organic food for the tourists), and supporting Carbon Neutral project. ACOPROT also organized the first 100% neutral fair in the world in 2009: EXPOTUR. The businesses with a carbon neutral, compensation, reforestation, or environmental program could enter freely and the businesses without any program were obligated to compensate the emissions of their trip (C. Lizama, personal communication, March 3, 2010).

IV.1.1.4 National Chamber of Ecotourism

The members of CANAECO elect the Board of Directors for a two year period and the board consists of ten directives. Currently Glenn Jampol, the owner of "Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation & Inn", is the president. The Executive Board is composed of four committees: the administrative, the marketing, the events & training, and the committee of climate change that works on the project of climate conscious travels in Costa Rica.

There are three categories of affiliates; academics, NGO's & private companies (membership fee US\$200/year and counts 55 members), individuals (US\$100/year and has six members) and students (US\$50/year). The main benefits they receive are: political and professional representation, discounts on forums and trainings organized by CANAECO, participation in working committees of CANAECO, exchange of information, and reduction to classes at the University for International Cooperation.

IV.1.1.5 National Tourism Cooperative

COOPRENA started as a network of agricultural micro cooperatives and when there was a decrease in the agricultural activity in the early nineties, they introduced the Rural Community-Based Tourism in 1994. In that way, the cooperatives could gain an additional income. SIMBIOSIS tours is part of COOPRENA and stands in for the commercializing the touristic product, improving the quality, be competitive, sustainable, and friendly for the environment. The projects of COOPRENA are financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, the Multilateral Investment Fund and through the sales of their brochure.

The cooperative has more than 20 initiatives and by paying the membership fee, the affiliates obtain several advantages. COOPRENA offers help in the development of the tourist product, provides trainings & seminars, and guides in obtaining CST, tourist declaratory or participation in other programs. COOPRENA also provides advice and consultancy services to companies and organizations in the following: good practices & sustainable tourism, formalization of TRC companies, advice in marketing and commercialization, and etc.

COOPRENA encourages their members to participate in programs as CST, BAE, and ESPP and helps them during the application process. Even more, they are participating in a recycling program and use biodegradable products as much as possible (D. Amador Prendas, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

IV.1.1.6 Costa Rican Association of Rural Tourism Community

The assembly of ACTUAR is formed by 40 community leaders who are the representatives of their community and owners of the organization. The Board of Directors consists of seven members of the associated communities and the members are elected by the assembly every two years. The workload is divided into four working areas: marketing promotion, strengthening through training, political impact, and resource management. Besides promoting the environmental, social, cultural, and

economic sustainability of TRC in Costa Rica, ACTUAR is also a tour operator. Through this activity they generate a part of their financial recourses. The association also receives various technical and training recourses from the state. Furthermore, ACTUAR is involved in a strategic project of United Nation's Small Grants Programme and through that, they obtain micro credits for several communities. There are several other institutions who contribute, although not in a financial way. The National Training Institute and the ICT provides training, the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE, Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad) promotes ACTUAR in the yellow pages, and the Ministry of Agriculture offers his help since ACTUAR is part of the Program of Rural Agriculture Tourism.

ACTUAR groups their members into four categories: environmental and conservation organizations, diversifying the productive activities, women organizations, and indigenous territories. Each of them has different initiatives but the same ultimate goal: to receive support for touristic development and help for conservation and productive activities.

ACTUAR supports the environmental services through protecting a 10,000 ha forest with touristic means such as walking trails. In addition, ACTUAR made an agreement with FONAFIFO to compensate the flights of the tourists by conserving or planning forests. Several of the members also participate in the ESPP program of FONAFIFO (K. Cruz, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

IV.1.1.7 Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators

ACOT is a relatively small association with only two employees. Its Board of Directors counts seven members and the association is financed through the membership fees and the earnings of its magazine.

Around fifty tour operators, travel agencies, guides and carriers of Costa Rica are represented by ACOT and this number has been steady since several years. One of the membership requirements is the tourist declaratory of the ICT, which ensures the reliability of the company. The membership fees are US\$390 for a semester and US\$780 for a year. In return they receive support, publicity, training, the chance to participate in forums, and several other services.

Some members have private reserves and participate in the Environmental Services Payment Program. ACOT also supports ESPP and encourages the initiatives

of the travel agencies. H. Cordero believes that the environmental impact of the tourism can be reduced when they build up a higher environmental awareness and specializes more in the topic (H. Cordero, personal communication, March 19, 2010).

IV.1.1.8 Overview

Figure IV-2 gives an overview of the members, the environmental actions & initiatives, and the link with programs of the tourism institutions and organizations. The information of the last two columns could be incomplete since not all institutions and organizations commented on these topics during the interviews and the secondary data did not always provide additional information.

Figure IV-2: Overview of institutions and organizations

Name and starting date	Roughly # of members	Type of members	Environmental actions & initiatives	Link with programs
ICT (1931)	1,500 (2008)	Lodging companies, travel agencies, rental car, water transport, gastronomic and entertainment, and airlines.		Manages CST and is member of the committee of BAE.
COOPRENA (1944)	20 (2010)	Agricultural micro cooperatives.	Recycle and use of biodegradable products.	Encourages and helps members to participate in CST, BAE, and ESPP.
CANATUR (1974)	800 (2010)	Travel agencies, carriers, lodging companies, restaurants, airlines and media.		Member of the committee of BAE and has agreement with FONAFIFO (Clean trip).
ACOPROT (1982)	1,000 (2010)	Professionals in tourism sector.	Owner of small plantations and offers help to green providers.	Supports the Carbon Neutral Project.
ACOT (1989)	50 (2010)	Travel agencies, guides and carriers.	Compensates emissions by planning more than 100 trees.	Encourages initiatives of members and supports ESPP.
ACTUAR (2001)	40 (2010)	Community leaders.	Protects a forest of 10,000 ha.	Agreement with FONAFIFO to compensate flights of customers and several members participate in ESPP.
CANAECO (2003)	60 (2010)	Academics, NGO's & private companies, individuals, and students.		

Source: The Author

All institutions and organizations promote a sustainable development in the tourism industry and several of them set an example through their environmental actions and initiatives. They also encourage their members to participate in the existing programs.

IV.1.2 On business level: criteria of classification

IV.1.2.1 Type of business and their sizes

a. Lodging companies

Executive decree No. 25226-MEIC-TUR (Costa Rica, 1996) includes the following as a lodging company; hotels, hotels with apartment facilities, condo hotels, time-share hotels, cabins, tourist motels, camps, shelters, and others that offer these services. The Costa Rican Tourism Institute declared 479 lodging companies in 2009 and from those companies, the average amount of rooms is 40, the minimum is four, and the maximum is 412 rooms. Since there is no official classification of hotels according to the size, this study will use its own classification. This classification is based on the amount of rooms of the declared lodging companies and divides them into three equally groups. Each group represents about 33% of the declared tourism companies, as seen in the fourth column of Table IV-1.

Table IV-1: Classification of lodging companies according to their size.

	Average amount(#) of stars		Division according to the size		Amount of interviews
	ICT	CST	ICT	CST	
Small: # 1-19 rooms	2.2	2.6	37%	39%	6
Medium: # 20-39 rooms	2.5	3.2	35%	29%	1
Big: # 40 -... rooms	3.4	4.0	28%	32%	4
Total			100%	100%	11
Total # companies			479	116	

Source: Calculations of the Author, based on secondary data of the ICT (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010) and data of CST (website).

When analyzing Table IV-1, several remarks may be drawn.

- The classification is according to the lodging companies with a tourist declaratory (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010) which only represent 18% of the total of 2,599 lodging companies (ICT, 2009). The reason for not classifying according to all lodging companies is because there is no data available to do so. Probably, the percentage of small lodging companies will be higher because medium and big sized lodging companies are more likely to obtain a tourist declaratory (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

- There is a strong similarity between the classification of the lodging companies with tourist declaratory and CST.
- The certified lodging companies have a higher level of stars compared with companies with tourist declaratory. This might be because during the process of declaration, the environmental variables are measured, as described in Decree No. 34046 MP-MEIC-TUR.

b. Tour operators and travel agencies

On international level, there is a difference between a tour operator and travel agency. Rainforest Alliance (RAINFOREST ALLIANCE, 2005), defines a travel agency as *“a business engaged in making travel arrangements and selling single or packaged services as an intermediary between users and service providers”* and a tour operator as *“a business that creates and/or markets all-inclusive trips and/or provides tourist services. It designs and operates its own tourist services to be sold through other agencies, in addition to selling them directly to the public”*. However in law No. 5339 (Costa Rica, 1973), there is no difference between travel agencies or tour operators, both are considered as *“all natural or legal persons involved in professional exercise of commercial activities, intended to serve as intermediaries between travellers and service providers used by individual, putting the tourist facilities and services available to those who wish to use”*.

Since there is only data available on the location of the travel agencies, the interviewee itself classifies the travel agency according to the size. When analyzing the statistics of the travel agencies with tourist declaratory (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010), it is noticeable that 65% of the travel agencies are located in the province of San José.

c. Carrier

Executive decree No. 25226-MEIC-TUR (Costa Rica, 1996) defines three types of carriers:

- Vehicles Rental: includes companies offering the rental service of automobiles for tourists, in order to facilitate their traffic within the national territory in exchange for a price.
- Maritime Transport: includes companies whose commercial activity consists of offering tourists any kind of ship, raft, boat, cruise ship, jet ski, sail ship, yacht, or something similar.

- Air Transport: includes companies rendering air transport service, be it internal or international, on itinerary routes or not.

According to the latest statistical yearbook of tourism (ICT, 2009) there were 25 vehicles rental, 38 maritime transport, and 28 air transport companies operating in 2008. In this study there were five vehicles rental interviewed, classified according to size, seen on Table IV-2, and one air transport company which classification is made by the interviewee.

Table IV-2: Classification of vehicles rental companies according to their size.

Division according to the size	
Small: # 1-49 vehicles	36%
Medium: # 50-299 vehicles	36%
Big: # 300 -... vehicles	28%
Total	100%
Total # companies	25

Source: The Author

IV.1.2.2 Level of sustainability

In topic III.2.4, the sample of the interviews was categorized according to their level of sustainability; sustainable or not sustainable companies. This classification is made by the author and based on the following.

Sustainable companies are companies who obtained a Certification for Sustainable Tourism or follow Best Practices. Best Practices are defined by Rainforest Alliance as *“to designate excellence, the highest quality, or superior practices in a particular field by a tourism operator”* (AMOS, 2008). During the study, the author classified companies who follow Best Practices as the companies who are truly involved with the environmental issues in order to lower their negative environmental impact, although they are not certified. In total there are eight companies classified as Best Practices and half of them are carriers since there is no certification for carriers. The other half are travel agencies and lodging companies who not believe in the working of the certificate.

Not sustainable companies are businesses who neither have a CST nor follow Best Practices. In other words, they don't comply, or only in a minor way, to be sustainable.

IV.2 THE DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

IV.2.1 According to the tourism type

As described in topic II.1.2, there are diverse modalities of tourism and this study made a selection on the three main tourism types in Costa Rica. All of those types of tourism can be considered as sustainable if they maintain the balance between three main areas: economic, environmental, and social (A. Brenes, personal communication, March 16, 2010). This was previously commented in topic II.1.2.2.

IV.2.1.1 Sun and beach

This modality is closely linked with the rich biodiversity of the costs (ZAMORA, N. and OBANDO V., 2001) and is currently the main activity of the tourists although his popularity is decreasing lightly (ICT, 2007). The beaches of Costa Rica offer a great setting for various activities such as snorkelling, sun bathing, and sport fishing.

The sun & beach tourism appreciate the landscape beauty, the cleanliness, and the protected areas of the environmental services (HEIN, W. and FÜRST, E., 2002) and in return they have a small environmental compromise. This modality of tourism is mostly represented by the local tourism chambers.

According to a hotel manager, the ICT is promoting the sun and beach tourism more than before. This is noticeable in the development of Guanacaste. He does not agree with this change of strategy because the spending of the tourists mostly stay at the same place (for example: the hotels, the bars, the local tours, etc.) and often bring problems with them (for example: sex tourism, drugs, etc.). Furthermore, he states that this type of tourism is not sustainable and not lasting since Costa Rica is known for its ecosystems and not for their beaches as there are other neighbouring countries with better beaches.

Through several interviewees the author got the impression that they don't support sun & beach tourism since the tourists prefer the luxury and companies that they known. Thus they will stay at international chains, eat western food and don't get to know the real Costa Rica. In that way local community don't benefit much from the touristic activity.

IV.2.1.2 Ecotourism

According to C. Lizama, the concept of ecotourism was introduced in the 1980's and these travellers came with a high scientific interest in the nature or for studying the nature. At the same time, a more 'softer' tourism existed in the country, known as nature and adventure tourism. The tourists were interested in the nature, but not in a scientific way and came to observe the fauna and flora, to practice sports, and to have an adventure. Nowadays the term "ecotourism" is more used for nature and adventure tourism as defined here above (C. Lizama, personal communication, March 3, 2010).

Ecotourism values the national & natural parks, the protected areas and the natural environment. In return they have a large compromise with the environment since it's the main attraction for the ecotourism (HEIN, W. and FÜRST, E., 2002). The main representative of ecotourism is CANAECO.

M. Barrantes thinks that instead of promoting sun & beach tourism, the focus should be on ecotourism. With ecotourism, there are plenty of people benefiting as tourists go to different regions (such as the mountains, the national parks, the volcanoes, etc.) and use various services (such as lodging companies, carriers, restaurants, etc.). Another advantage of ecotourism is the money, gathered from entree fees of parks, can help with the protection of the environment (M. Barrantes, personal communication, April 6, 2010).

IV.2.1.3 Rural Community-Based Tourism

The Agrarian Development Institute (IDA, Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario) started in the beginning of the nineties with a program for the Rural Community-Based Tourism as a viable alternative for the local development. In the centre of the local community, IDA provides a basic infrastructure such as houses, a church and a school. Around the centre, the rural areas are divided in two parts: an agricultural and an agro-ecotourism part. The agriculture part is divided between the families who don't own ground to cultivate or breed. The objective of the program is to diversify the activities and thus the locals obtain a complementary income. Since 2008, the IDA and the ICT are working together and several other actors are interested in the program of TRC. The United Nation's Small Grants Programme provides financial recourses, so that the locals can make natural reserves, build lodging facilities, and create touristic activities. Other NGO's, ACTUAR and COOPRENA also support the program. The future prospect is a closer link between the traditional lodging companies and the TRC. For example: developing small businesses with the help of the locals, promoting a local bar in the

lodging companies, selling handicrafts of women organizations, etc. Slowly, the tourism sector is changing and this change has a positive influence on TRC (A. Damaris, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

The non touristic natural places, the cultural interchange, and being a part of the local community are one of the highly appreciated aspects in rural community-based tourism (CRUZ, 2009:19). Hence the environment of the community is very important and therefore TRC has a compromise to protect it. The TRC is represented by various institutions, such as ACTUAR, COOPRENA and the Chamber of Rural Tourism.

According to the promoter of TRC, the concept of environmental services is not used explicitly, nevertheless TRC is great opportunity for a good development of a local community. It helps protecting and conserving the nature and the locals have a higher living standard without sacrificing natural resources. The interrelationship between ES and TRC could be strengthened by participating in programs as the Program Payments for Environmental Services and the Ecological Blue Flag (A. Damaris, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

IV.2.2 According to the tourism companies

In this topic, all results from the survey of tourism companies will be presented. The sample is not representative for the whole tourism sector due to the limited number and area of study. Although it can be used to understand the different models that exist in the industry.

IV.2.2.1 General

a. Environmental challenges at country level

According to the survey, the main environmental challenges pointed out by the interviewees are:

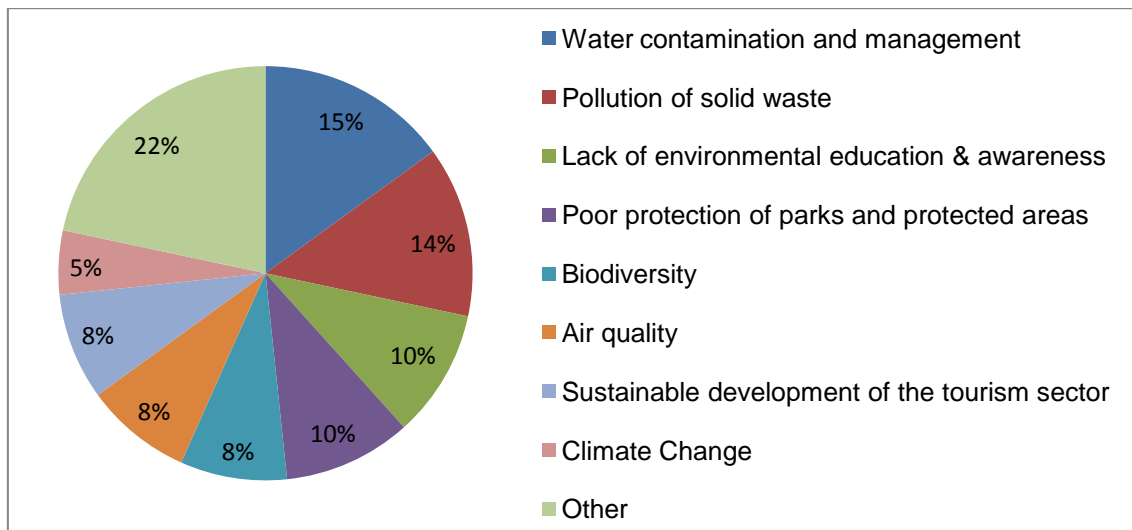
- pollution of solid waste due to the garbage on the streets and poor recycling practices,
- water contamination caused by the waste at rivers and oceans, and
- biodiversity because it's a great asset of the country and everybody should do an effort in order to conserve it.

Lodging companies and carriers point out the importance of the mitigation of climate change as it can cause several natural disasters and has an effect on all the other environmental challenges.

b. Environmental challenges for the tourism sector

Through the survey, the following data is obtained: 15% of the interviewees consider water contamination and management as one of the main environmental challenges for the tourism sector, 14% pollution of solid waste, 10% lack of environmental education & awareness, and 10% poor protection of parks and protected areas. Other challenges are: protection of the biodiversity, air quality, sustainable development of the tourism sector, and climate change.

Figure IV-3: Environmental challenges for the tourism sector



Source: The Author

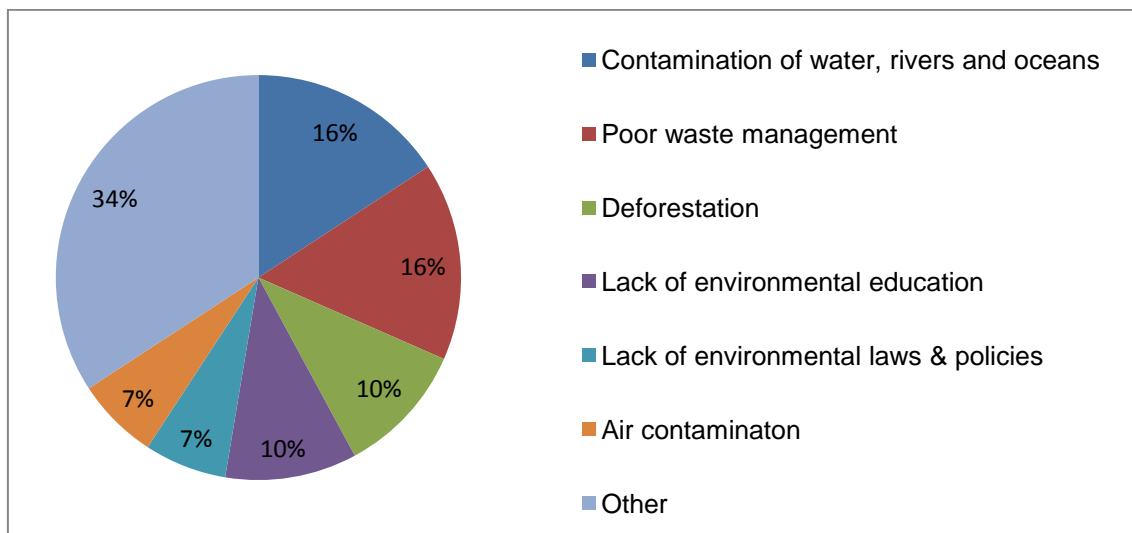
c. Important ecosystems

Throughout the survey, independent of the type of company, size or level of sustainability, the tourism companies value the following ecosystems as the three most important in order to preserve the environment; the forests, the protected areas, and the marine ecosystem. According to the interviewees, the forests are the most important since they compensate the emissions, offer clean air, protect the water, and attract the tourists. The protected areas are essential to the biodiversity, the animals and to maintain the balance in the ecosystems. The marine ecosystem helps to be a clean planet and needs protection since there the biodiversity in the ocean is decreasing.

d. Environmental problems

In a breakdown of the environmental problems percentage, the following data is obtained: 16% water contamination, 16% poor waste management, 10% deforestation, and 10% lack of environmental education. Other important problems noticed by the interviewees are the lack of environmental laws & policies and the air contamination. The two main problems are mostly recognized by the lodging companies since they are the most polluting in water and waste and therefore know the problems. The carriers are mainly aware of the deforestation issue as they produce CO₂ and try to compensate their emissions by planting trees. There is also a noticeable difference between the sustainable and non sustainable companies. The sustainable companies acknowledge more the problems of deforestation, lack of environmental education, and air contamination.

Figure IV-4: Environmental problems



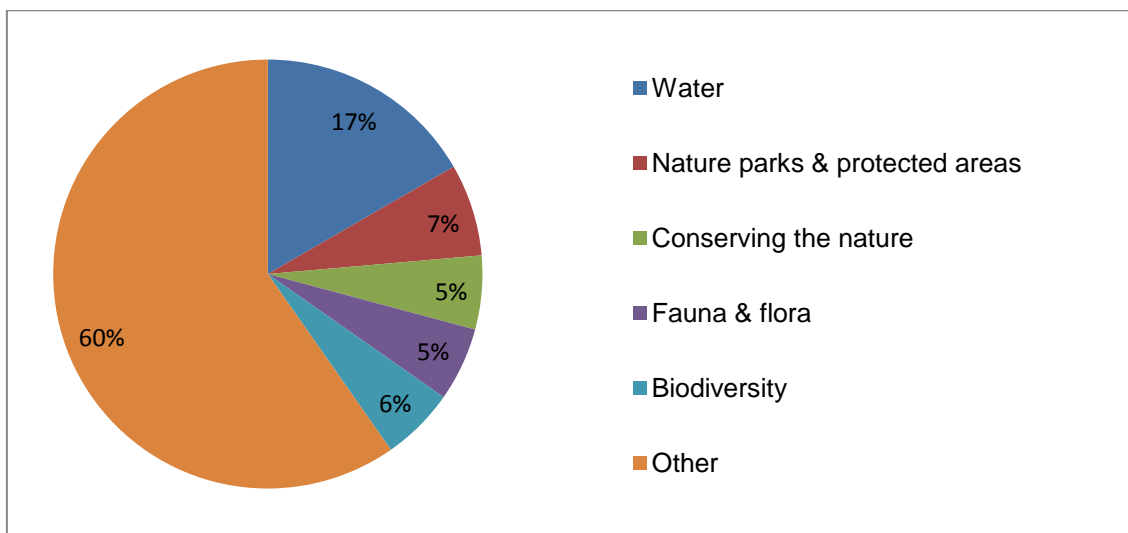
Source: The Author

e. Importance of environment for tourism activities

According to the survey, the tourism companies consider water (17%), nature parks & protected areas (7%), biodiversity (6%), fauna & flora (5%), and conserving the nature (5%) as the main environmental themes for the tourism activities. According to the majority, water is important for touristic purposes (such as beaches, surfing, and rafting) but is also very valuable for human needs (such as daily use and production of hydro-electricity) and therefore should be protected from contamination. Nature parks & protected areas and conserving the nature are mainly acknowledged by the travel agencies and lodging companies since these topics attract the tourists and supports the countries slogan "Costa Rica no artificial ingredients". Through the survey it is

observed that mainly small companies value the biodiversity and fauna and flora. In the group of “other”, the following answers are found: the climate change, the contamination, the cleanness, the climate, etc...

Figure IV-5: Importance of environment for tourism activities



Source: The Author

f. Impact of environment on tourism activities

55% of the tourism companies consider the environment as a benefit for their activity as tourists come to Costa Rica for the natural environment. 15% think that the uncontrolled tourism development and the over construction are the downside. This thought is mainly shared by the travel agencies, carriers and the sustainable companies.

g. Requests for being environmental friendly

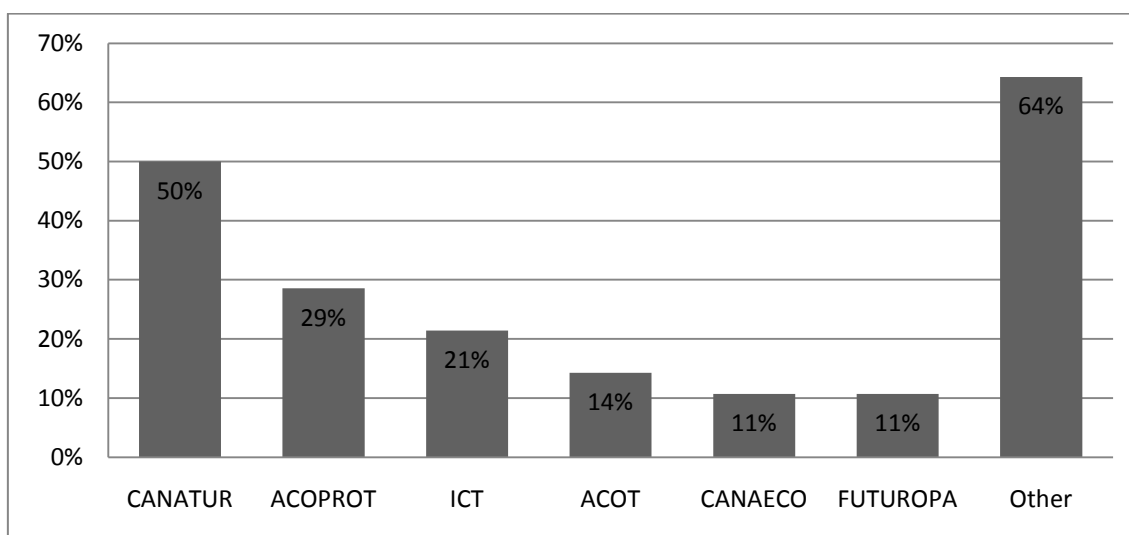
More than half of the interviewees receive a request from their clients to be environmental friendly. In addition, requests come from the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (14%) since the ICT only works together with certified lodging companies when they organize for example: seminars, congresses and such. Another 14 % receive a request from other tourism companies, mainly the certified companies, as they suggest only certified business to their clients.

h. Membership of institutions or organizations

According to the survey, half of the interviewees are member of CANATUR, 29% of ACOPROT, 21% of ICT, 14% of ACOT, 11% of CANAECO, 11% of FUTUREUROPA and several more of Rainforest Alliance, local chambers and

organization. The main reasons for their participation is because the institutions and organizations promote the tourism market, give information, participate in fairs, help to develop new products, etc. Throughout the survey, it is clear that the sustainable companies are more inclined to be a member and lodging companies are not likely to be one. Thus a possible conclusion is that companies connected with associations receive information about environmental issues and therefore tend to be more aware and more active in the environmental issue. Another important remark is that almost none of the small companies are member since they are less likely to receive information about the organizations, don't have confidence in them, or do not have the financial means to become member.

Figure IV-6: Membership of institutions or organizations



Source: The Author

IV.2.2.2 Environmental services

a. Knowledge about the concept of environmental services

Of all tourism companies, 36% have a thorough knowledge of the concept of environmental services and gained this knowledge through FONAFIFO, more specifically through the ESPP or the governmental press. 54% are not familiar with the concept and 10% heard about it but doesn't have a profound knowledge of the ES. Generally, there are more small and medium sized companies who are acquainted with the environmental services.

b. Responsibilities for maintaining environmental services

One third of the interviewees state that everybody, including the tourism sector, is responsible for maintaining the environmental services and another third places the

responsibility at governmental level. The government should maintain these services with the tax money and they should develop more strict laws and policies concerning this matter. Other responses on this question were FONAFIFO and MINAE.

c. Importance of environmental services

When asking the interviewees about the importance of the environmental services on country level and tourism sector, the following result was obtained, see Table IV-3.

Table IV-3: Importance of environmental services.

	Country level	Tourism sector
Mitigation of emissions of greenhouse gases	2	1
Protection of water	1	4
Protection of biodiversity	3	2
Scenic beauty	4	3

Source: The Author

It is noticeable that on country level the lodging companies have a greater focus on the protection of the biodiversity because the biodiversity is one of the main reasons why the country is that attractive to the tourists. Meanwhile, the carriers value the mitigations of emissions of greenhouse gases more as they produce greenhouse gases and they can compensate for those mitigations. In the tourism sector, the mitigation is very important because the tourists generate plenty of emissions (flights, transport in country, etc.) and the travel agencies and lodging companies consider the protection of the biodiversity as a main service with the same reason as mentioned above.

d. Perception on scenic beauty

According to the survey, a third of the interviewees consider scenic beauty as the beauty of the nature (no waste, no vehicles, no construction, untouched nature, etc.), 27% as the biodiversity (forests, animals, fauna and flora, rivers, etc.), 23% as the attractive element for the tourists, and 18% as all the green landscapes. Half of the interviewees place the responsibility of these services in the hands of everybody and one third in the hands of the government (answered by mostly non sustainable companies). Others who are responsible for the service of scenic beauty are the private businesses, FONAFIFO and local groups. When asking who should maintain the scenic beauty, the following results were obtained: the government (24%), everybody (16%), various organizations (16%), MINAE (16%), private businesses (8%) and others such as the municipalities and SINAC.

IV.3 THE STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS WHICH PROMOTE THE UTILIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

IV.3.1 Programs

IV.3.1.1 The programs in the tourism sector

All programs described below are on voluntary basis and thus only be used if the individuals see a benefit in them or consider it as the right thing to do.

a. Certification for Sustainable Tourism

The CST program is financed by the ICT and the process to obtain a CST is very transparent (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010). Firstly, the tourism company approaches the Costa Rican Tourism Institute and presents the requested documents. Two months after the first encounter, the ICT evaluates the tourism company with an evaluation questionnaire (153 questions for lodging companies and 108 questions for travel agencies). Each question is related with a grading system (one to three points), which is appointed according to their importance. After applying a technical regulation, ICT makes a report of the tourism company. Secondly, the ICT enters all the answers in a computer program and gives a mark for each company. This mark refers to the amount of leafs the company could receive. Lastly, the ICT presents the company to the National Accreditation Commission. This commission is represented by the responsible of the program implementation (the Costa Rican Tourism Institute), the educational sector (the Costa Rican University and Central America Business Administration Institute), the private sector (the National Tourism Chamber, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Earth Council), and the public sector (Costa Rican Environment & Energy Ministry and the Biodiversity National Institute). This commission will give the final amount of leafs to the tourism company.

Over the last years there were some changes in the executive decree N° 27235-MEIC-MINAE (Costa Rica, 1998 and V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010). The first change was the establishment of a marketing committee that strengthens the CST program. For example, nowadays the ICT only works together with certified lodging companies when organizing congresses and events. The second change was that external institutions can evaluate companies with a CST. The ICT invited the National Tourism Chamber, the Costa Rican Chamber of Hotels, and the Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators to participate in the program. The development centre of the University of Costa provides the structure of the program.

According to the survey of the tourism companies, two fifths of the interviewees know about the CST program and from that group, 60% participates. The group of participants can be divided in two, according to the reasons of participation. The first group considers the CST as a result of their environmental, social, and cultural initiatives during the last years and the certificate stimulates them to go even further. The second group believes that the CST is a good marketing tool that will improve the green image of the company and in that way hopes to attract more tourists. Most of those businesses were not environmentally involved before applying for a Certification for Sustainable Tourism.

According to data obtained through the interview, half of the certified businesses are big. However, the secondary data obtained through the website of CST shows otherwise. Table IV-1 shows that the division of the certified businesses is almost equally divided. The latter is more trustworthy as it shows the division for all certified businesses, 116 in total.

An overview of other benefits, mentioned by the interviewees, are the economic advantages of saving water and energy, receiving recommendations by other certified companies, diversification in the touristic industry, and gaining preference of the ICT (for example, the ICT organize seminars or congresses only in certified lodging companies or gives them reduction to tourism fairs).

The 40% of interviewees that are familiar with CST, but not participating are mainly small or medium sized companies. The small businesses find the process of certification too complicated, time consuming, and they consider themselves too small or not suitable. The other reasons why companies do not participate are: they believe that the questionnaire is sometimes illogical (for example: the company get a positive evaluation when they have air-condition although air-condition is very energy consuming), they don't see how the certificate could increase their business, or in the case of carriers: they can't apply for certification yet.

As a final comment on the CST program, one can conclude that through the participation, the environmental impacts of the tourism companies will be reduced. As a result, the tourism industry benefit from the CST program as the natural environment is one of their strong assets to attract tourists.

b. Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance's tourism program is financed by several funds such as the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Ford Foundation, the Overbrook Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, the Global Environment Facility/United Nations Environment Programme, Mitsubishi and Citigroup Foundation, and others.

The three-phased process to participate in the Program of Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism starts with a training in good practices and sustainability. During the two days training, offered at the owners, managers and staff of the tourism business, Rainforest Alliance provides basic information about sustainable tourism and Best Practices. They also give tools to design an action plan to implement those practices. The second phase, technical assistance to improve the sustainability performance, allows tourism companies to judge their sustainability performance, to design and implement a plan to improve the performance, to take action to get certified, and to monitor the process towards continuous improvements. The performance is based on six criterias: socio-cultural & community, solid waste, energy use, water & contamination, environmental education, and monitoring & corrective action. In the last phase the businesses that achieved a good sustainability performance receives a number of marketing and communication benefits. These benefits are making contact with strategic tourism markets, creating relationships with major international companies, and financial savings due to reduced electricity bills, income from the sale of recyclable materials, and reduced purchases of cleaning products and batteries. The costs of participation depend on the location and need of the business, the expenses on new infrastructure, and time spend of staff during the process (NEWSOM and CLAUDINE, 2008 and R. Morales, personal communication, April 15, 2010).

The main change in the popularity of the program in Costa Rica is the introduction of the CST. Since CST exists, the tourism companies choose to get certified instead of following the program of Rainforest Alliance (E. Solís, personal communication, March 29, 2010). Rainforest Alliance doesn't have a certificate, only a program for sustainable tourism, and supports local certification programs such as CST in Costa Rica. In that way they increase their international recognition and establish a regional network.

From all interviewees, there are only three that participate in the program of Rainforest Alliance. The two travel agencies (Horizontes and Ecole Travel) have the

highest level of the CST and the carrier, Mapache, is a carbon neutral company. The main reason for participation is the training that Rainforest Alliance offers to its members.

The Program of Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Tourism can considerably improve the level sustainability of the lodging company and has a positive impact on the way hoteliers and staff interact with guests, local communities, and the environment (NEWSOM and CLAUDINE, 2008).

IV.3.1.2 The programs from other sectors

a. National Fund for Forestry Financing

Environmental Services Payment Program

The ESPP's main financial support is through the 3.5% of sole fuel tax that is allocated for ESPP. Other funding sources come from the State of Costa Rica, the World Bank, the World Environmental Fund, and the German Government. However, those funds were insufficient to supply the increasing demand and thus the ESPP made agreements with private companies who are willing to invest in ESPP. These investments are made through the Certificates for Environmental Services.

When the landowner wants to apply for the program, he must present a sustainable forest plan and adopt the specified practices. In order to handle applications, sign contracts and monitor implementation, FONAFIFO established eight regional offices. The landowners receive payments once a year and the payments are the same everywhere in the country (PAGIOLA, 2007:716).

The principal change in the program was the expansion to other modalities. Nowadays there are nine different payments the landowners can apply for.

Of all interviewees, 40% are familiar with the Environmental Services Payment Program of FONAFIFO, mainly those are carriers, sustainable or small companies. Albergue Nacientes Palmichal, a rural lodging company, is the only interviewee that receives payments from FONAFIFO and think that the program could improve in prioritizing the areas of investing and having more economic incentive. A manager of a travel agency in Cahuita owns a private forest and refuses to participate in ESPP because he does not agree with its working. He believes that the program benefits only the rich landowners and that not enough money goes to the forest owners. Therefore he will create his own program: Adopt a Tree. The idea is that individuals can make

donations to conserve a tree in his private forest and in that way help the natural environment.

Depending on the type of ESPP, seen at Table II-10, the contributions to the environmental services are different. Generally, the ESPP helps the conservation of forests, the reforestation, the protection water recourses, and the natural regeneration in pastures.

Certificates for Environmental Services

The businesses and institutions that receive benefits from environmental services can invest in a CSA and FONAFIFO uses these funds to compensate forest owners for preserving the ES. All these funds are managed through a Trust Fund at the National Bank of Costa Rica. To verify the process FONAFIFO receives assistance of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre, the Junta National Forestal Campesina, several internal and external audits, and the General Comptroller's Office.

The interested businesses and institutions can decide how much they would like to invest, according to the amount of hectares. Currently the price of a contract is set by US\$57 per hectare/per year and with a duration of five years. Once the contract is approved, the investor is assigned to an account number in the National Bank of Costa Rica and can make the yearly deposits. After the first payment, the investor receives the Certificates for Environmental Services and will be mentioned on the webpage of FONAFIFO.

In the sample interviews, there are five businesses that invested in CSA: one travel agency with the highest level of certification and four carriers who follow the best practices. The reasons for participating vary from helping to protect forests, compensating emissions, and for personal satisfaction. All these reasons are with the underlining idea that participating is a correct thing to do. Other interviewees made propositions to improve the program by increasing the awareness of the program, prioritizing the investing areas, and boosting the efficiency.

Depending on the type of certificate for environmental service, the link with the ES is different. The CSA clean trip focuses on protecting forests and the biodiversity, CSA vital water on the protection of aquifers and forests, and the CSA living forest on the protection of tropical forests.

b. Ecological Blue Flag

Several organizations support the Ecological Blue Flag program because they are aware of the danger that pollution and lack of protection of water resources can have on the tourism industry. Among them are AyA, ICT, MINAE, MINSA, ICE Group, CANATUR, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP, Ministerio de Educación Pública), and The Costa Rican Network of Natural Reserves.

In order to obtain the BAE award there are six stages to pass: conformation of the local BAE committee, registration, realization of initial diagnosis, preparation of annual work plan, monitoring the work plan, and finally the presentation of the final report. The participation in the program is free of charge and the benefits are for the current and future generations.

The main changes over the years are the extension of the program to new areas and the prospects are that the program will gain popularity.

According to the survey, there are only two companies who participate in the BAE program: the travel agency Horizontes which is certified with five leaves of CST and the carbon neutral carrier Mapache. Regarding to them, the principal advantages of participating are the contribution to the natural environment and the conservation of natural resources.

Due to the diversity of the BAE program, each category of the BAE program has a specific impact on the environment. The Ecological Blue Flag for beaches tackles the problematic of water quality of the ocean and for human consumption, sanitary quality of the coasts, environmental education, administration, and security. The program for the non coastal communities focuses their attention on water for human consumption, waste disposal, signalization of roads & touristic attractions, health care, protection of water resources, and police and environmental safety. The third category, educational institutions, values water services for human consumption, sanitation and liquid disposal, hygiene, environmental education, and administration and security. The group of protected natural areas judges the level of stars according to the performance in the protection of the vegetation, conservation & use of water resources, adoption of control measurements & environmental protection, waste management, and administration. The program for micro-watersheds finds the following topics important: the inventory of water uses and sources of pollution, the classification of the quality of surface water, the reduction of solid waste, the process of reforestation near the micro-

watershed, and environmental education. The last category, actions to address the climate change is divided into two. The first group, variety of mitigation, values the reduction in use of fossil fuel, potable water and electricity, treatment of wastewater, the removal of sprays harmful to the ozone layer, reforestation and reduction of paper use, environmental education, and cleanliness and hygiene of the facilities. The second group, variety of adaption, focuses on the water quality for agricultural use, the management and conservation of the soil, the use and control of pesticides and antibiotics, operational and administrative management, waste disposal, and environmental management (V. Espinoza, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

c. Climate Change Allies Program

The program of ACC receive assistance from various organizations such as the National University of Costa Rica who helps with the research, the Bank of Costa Rica with the financial part, the Global language of business GS1 with technology, the ICE group with the promotion. Other NGO's, associations, and the Control Union of Certifications also support the program. Moreover, the program is member of Ashoka, a global association of social entrepreneurs.

When participating in the Social Responsibility Program, the company receives a complete calculation of their carbon footprint and can choose the degree of participation. Each level is associated with a marketing name: complete compensation "Guayacán Real", 75% compensation "Caoba", 50% compensation "Cristóbal", or 25% compensation "Guanacaste". For the other three types; eco seal for vehicles, green vacations and give live with a postcard, a simple donation is required.

Since the program is relatively young, it started in 2007, not so many people know the program and their biggest challenges are to stand out in the big offer of "green programs" and defend against plagiarism. The difference with FONAFIFO is that the ACC program stands for the adaptation and FONAFIFO more for the forest value and wood production (Lang Patiño, L., personal communication, March 25, 2010).

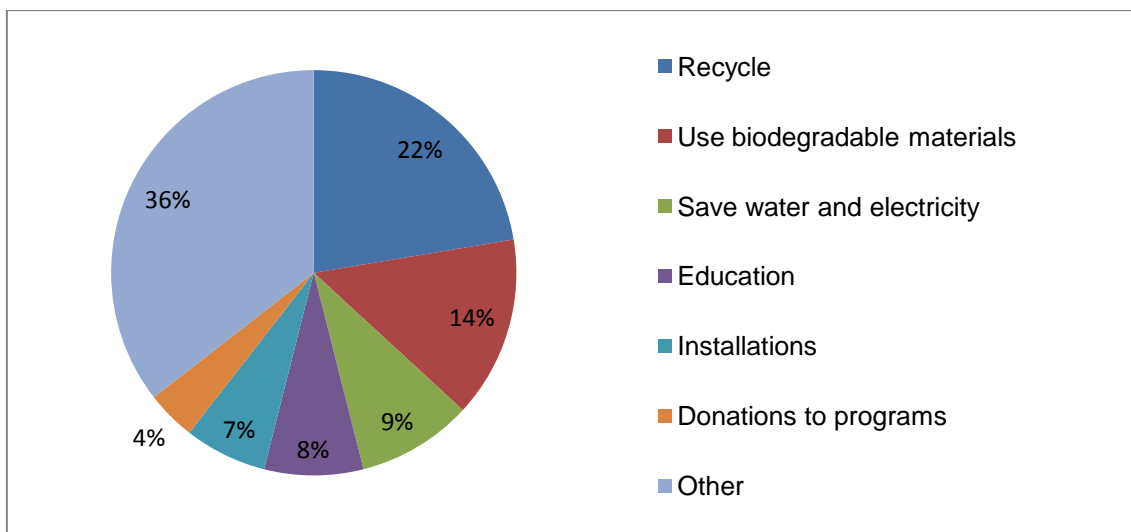
Of all interviewees, only travel agency Horizontes participates through the Eco seal for vehicles. They consider it a way to compensate the emissions of the transport of their touristic guides and staff.

The main goal of the program is to increase the reforestation and in that way contributing to environmental services. The program gives the priority to areas for reforestation such as watersheds, biological corridors, priority areas (for example, to increase the biological diversity), and areas that are convenient for reforestation with the help of volunteers (for example, close to a city or educational centres). The exact location of reforestation is determined by the watershed protection and soil regeneration.

IV.3.2 Actions and initiatives of tourism companies

According to the survey, all actions they do are on voluntary basis and they don't receive help doing so. 22% of the interviewees recycle their wastes because it's a good thing to do and it helps the environment. One of the problems they face is the awareness of the employees. The benefits they have from recycling could be personal satisfaction, helps to get a CST, gives a green image of the company, is less contaminating, creates awareness to employees, neighbours & family, and can sell the recycled waste for little money. The 14% of interviewees that uses biodegradable materials say that in that way they want to contribute to the environment and create a green image of the business. The advantages are creating environmental awareness of the employees and the personal satisfaction. A tenth of the interviewees saves water and electricity and as a result saves money, although the installations can be costly. Less popular actions and initiatives are to provide environmental education to tourists to create awareness, to use installations to capture solar energy or rainwater, and to make donations to programs.

Figure IV-7: Actions and initiatives of tourism companies



Source: The Author

In general, the sustainable companies have more actions and initiatives in favour of the natural environment. The lodging companies have the most installations for capturing solar energy or rainwater as they are big consumers of energy and water. The medium and large companies have stronger economic resources and are more likely to invest in saving water and energy and to recycle.

In the coastal towns Puerto Viejo and Cahuita, the interviewees did not have much trust in the government mainly because they don't see results of their tax money or financial donations made by foreign countries. This is one of the reasons why they start their own initiatives such as contributing to a local organization that keeps the town clean or starting with an own program like Adopt a Tree. One lodging company states that they are not the polluters but the big international companies are. They see all the chemical use on the banana plantation goes to the rivers and to the ocean and as a result the marine life suffers and there is a bad smell. He thinks that those problems should be tackled first in order to call the country sustainable or green. Furthermore, he thinks that Costa Rica doesn't need those international businesses because the country is rich in natural resources, has a good fertility and enough ecosystems to grow crops by small and local companies (Van Dyck, K., personal communication, April 1, 2010).

Another comment can be made about the social responsibility of the tourism businesses. Throughout the interviews one can notice that environmental friendly companies are more likely involved in social projects such as Code of Conduct or supporting educational programs. Code of Conduct stands in for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in the tourism industry.

IV.3.3 Overview

Table IV-4 gives an overview of the links between the categories of businesses, programs, and actions. The table is based on the data obtained through the questionnaires with the tourism companies. The groups that mainly participate in the various programs are highlighted in green, the groups that are familiar with the program in purple and the biggest category of an action is highlighted in yellow. Actions to lower environmental impact are considered as recycling, reducing use of water & energy, decreasing their solid waste, using biodegradable materials, etc... Educational and social actions are actions that are related to the increase of environmental awareness of tourists and Costa Rican citizens, the support of environmental education programs, and take up their social responsibility. Examples of forestry actions are planning trees and conserving plantations.

Table IV-4: Interrelation between types of businesses and programs & actions

	Programs						Actions			
	CST	BAE	ESPP	CSA	ACC	Rainforest Alliance	More than 3 actions	Actions to lower env. impact	Educational and social actions	Forestry actions
Level of sustainability										
* Sustainable							86%	68%	100%	75%
* Not sustainable							14%	32%	0%	25%
Size of business										
* Small							43%	42%	22%	75%
* Medium							21%	21%	44%	0%
* Big							36%	32%	33%	25%
Type of business										
* Lodging company							43%	47%	22%	25%
* Travel agency							36%	21%	56%	50%
* Carrier							21%	32%	22%	25%
TOTAL # companies							14	19	9	4

Source: The Author

Table IV-5 gives an overview of the link between the programs and the actions. As seen clearly on the graph, the certified companies are more likely to participate in environmental, educational, and social actions.

Table IV-5: Interrelation between programs and actions

	Actions			
	More than 3 actions	Actions to lower env. impact	Educational and social actions	Forestry actions
Programs				
CST	39%	35%	27%	0%
BAE	6%	5%	7%	20%
ESPP	6%	5%	7%	20%
CSA	17%	25%	20%	20%
ACC	17%	15%	20%	20%
Rainforest Alliance	17%	15%	20%	20%

Source: The Author

Table IV-6 shows that sustainable lodging companies are more likely to be involved with various actions and actions to lower their environmental impact. One of the reasons is because the lodging companies are the most polluting companies regarding to water and solid waste in the tourism sector. The sustainable travel agencies mainly make an effort in increasing the environmental awareness since they are in contact with many tourists and also guide them through the country.

Table IV-6: Interrelation between categories of companies, programs and actions.

			Programs						Actions			
			CST	BAE	ESPP	CSA	ACC	Rainforest Alliance	More than 3 actions	Actions to lower env. impact	Educational and social actions	Forestry actions
Sustainable	* Lodging companies	Small	9%		100%				14%	11%	11%	
		Medium	9%						7%	5%		
		Big	27%						21%	16%	11%	
	* Travel agencies	Small	9%						7%	5%	22%	25%
		Medium	27%			20%	33%	33%	7%	11%	22%	25%
		Big	18%				33%	33%	7%	11%	11%	
	* Carriers	Small				20%				5%		
		Medium				20%			7%	5%	11%	
		Big		100%		40%	33%	33%	7%	5%		
Not sustainable	* Lodging companies	Small							14%	16%		25%
		Medium										
		Big										
	* Travel agencies	Small								5%	11%	25%
		Medium										
		Big										
	* Carriers	Small							7%	5%		
		Medium										
		Big										
Total # companies			11	1	1	5	3	3	14	19	9	4

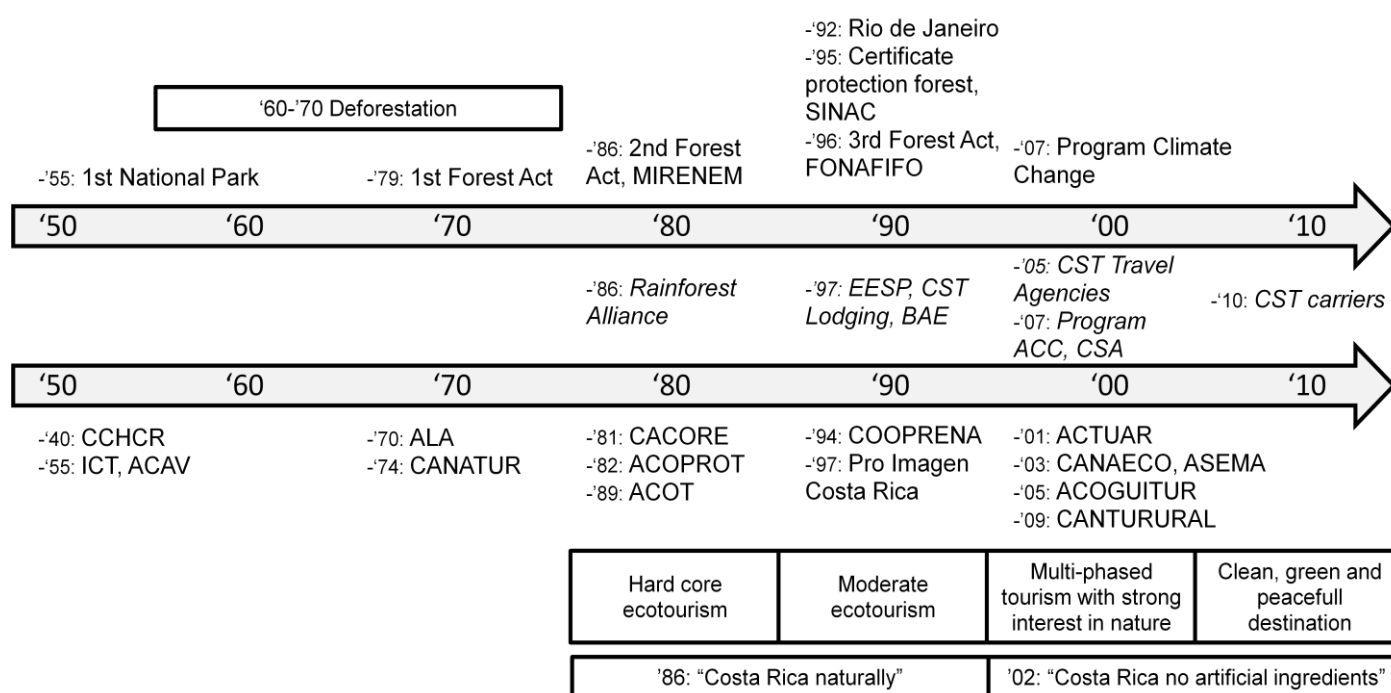
Source: The Author

IV.4 INTERRELATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

IV.4.1 A look at the past

The development of the tourism sector has been described in detail in topic II.1.1 and the evolution of the environmental situation of the country in topic II.2.2. In Figure IV-8, the both developments are presented in one timeline.

Figure IV-8: Timeline of environmental situation and tourism sector



Source: The Author

After the strong deforestation of the sixties and seventies, the country made an effort to reverse that movement by creating new forest acts, national parks, ministries, FONAFIFO and the two programs EESP and CST. Meanwhile the tourism sector was growing rapidly and had an evolution on his own; from hard core ecotourism to more diversified tourism such as sun & beach, surf, business, TRC, etc. Over the last years, the two sectors came together by implementing various programs that are beneficial to the natural environment. Programs as CSA and Program ACC successfully narrows the gap between the sectors by making ES programs for the tourism sector.

IV.4.2 A look in the future

The expectations are that the ES and the tourism sector will keep growing toward each other. Hereunder is a listing of possible plans and ideas for making that relationship even stronger. This list is gathered through the literature study, the interviews with institutions & organizations, and the questionnaires with tourism companies.

- Have a better collaboration between the different levels in the tourism sector. The big companies or who are located in San José are more likely to know about programs and actions than the small businesses or located outside the capital.
- Implement stronger environmental laws, penalize the polluters, and have a stricter control on construction and deforestation.
- Educate the population by provide training and enlarge their environmental awareness.
- Expand the programs to other sectors to become to first Carbon Neutral country in 2021. Mainly focus on the big companies with a high level of pollution.
- Improve the recycle program by making it more accessible for the people and by giving information about how to recycle.
- Inform tourists about the various voluntary programs that exist for compensating their trip in Costa Rica.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussions of the previous chapter, this chapter draws conclusions and proposes some suggestions.

V.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The main objectives of this study is to identify the different tourist actors and their perception of environmental services, to characterize the strategies and actions which promote utilization of environmental services, and to propose better contributions to the production of environmental services. As an attempt to reach the objectives, several research questions were formed. Therefore each question will be answered with the help of the data obtained through the study.

The complexity of the tourism industry can be explained by two key aspects. Firstly, it is highly sensible to economic and political changes on national and international level. And secondly, the tourism sector is related to many other sectors, such as transport, food, attractions, travel agencies, support services, training, etc... Within the tourism industry there is no comprehensible classification according to the tourism type, however through the study three main tourism types are found. These types are: sun & beach, ecotourism, and rural community-based tourism. The tourism companies can be characterized by their level of sustainability, their size and their type of businesses. The sustainable companies are those who have obtained the Certification for Sustainable Tourism or apply Best Practices. The latter are classified by the author and the Best Practices are based on the definition of Rainforest Alliance. It was found that sustainable companies are more inclined to be a member of tourism institutions and organization and through that membership they receive information about environmental issues and actions. Therefore they tend to be more aware and more active in the environmental issue.

Less than 40% of the interviewees of tourism companies are familiar with the concept of environmental services although everybody recognises the importance of the natural environment for the tourism sector. The Costa Rican Tourism Institute also acknowledges the importance of the natural environment and therefore supports the Certification for Sustainable Tourism and the Ecological Blue Flag program.

The strategies and actions of the tourism companies are participating in various programs or start with own initiatives on company's level. The most common initiatives are recycling and using biodegradable materials. The two main reasons to make environmental efforts are for protecting the natural resources and for obtaining a green image of the business and thus attract more tourists.

The tourism sector of Costa Rica uses two types of programs in order to have a better contribution to the environmental services. The first type of program focuses on reducing the environmental impact and providing environmental education. Examples are the Certification for Sustainable Tourism, the Best Practices of Rainforest Alliance and the Ecological Blue Flag program. This group mainly concentrates on the tourism sector and contributes to the sustainable development of the tourism sector. The second group are the programs of FONAFIFO (Environmental Services Payment Program and Certificates for Environmental Services) and the Climate Change Allies Program. These programs do not tackle the problem of emission of gases but compensates the emissions through reforestation. They stand for the protection of biodiversity and water services. There is only a small part of these programs that focuses on the tourism sector, for example: Clean Trip of CSA and Green Vacations of ACC. The two groups are complementary to each other since the first one aims to lower the environmental impact and the second group aims to compensate their emissions.

One year after the recognition of the environmental services in 1996, the tourism industry implemented the Certification for Sustainable Tourism and the Ecological Blue Flag program. Nowadays those programs are considered as the biggest in the sector and still are gaining popularity. Over the last five years many of the tourism companies started with their own environmental initiatives or actions in order to reduce their negative environmental impact. Although all interviewees agree that these environmental actions are not enough.

Several initiatives could be made in order to improve or simply the participation of the tourism actors in the environmental services. Firstly, the information of the programs and actions should be reported to all tourism stakeholders with an appropriate explanation why. Secondly, the government should enact stronger environmental laws and penalize the polluters and violators of the law. Thirdly, create a higher environmental awareness through environmental education and training. And lastly, expand the programs, improve recycle projects, and educate the tourists.

V.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has as main limitations the small amount of interviews and the area of study. Therefore the reader should keep it mind that the conclusions drawn represent a part of the country and thus cannot be generalized and implemented to other locations.

With the aim of making broader conclusions, the area of study should be extended and more institutions & organizations should be interviewed. Moreover, the motives and opinion of the government and environmental institutions should be illustrated.

The study also does not include a cost benefit analysis of the various programs. How much does the tourism business invest in the programs (financially, time, etc.) and what are the benefits and impact of participating?

As last recommendation for further research, the relationship with other sectors such as agriculture could be investigated. To what extend do the benefits of the programs go? And which other sectors are benefiting of the environmental services?

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Certification for Sustainable Tourism: www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr , Retrieved May 28, 2010.

- Position on the website: About CST, Certification process, and Directory.
- Reason of interest: Offers valuable information about the Certification program in Costa Rica. The database of lodging companies and travel agencies is also very up to date.

Climate Change Allies Program: www.programaacc.com , Retrieved June 1, 2010.

- Position on the website: Home, about us, How can I participate? and Affiliates.
- Reason of interest: Provides additional information of the program and describes clearly the program.

Costa Rican Association of Tourism Professionals: www.acoprot.org , Retrieved May 30, 2010.

- Position on the website: About us, Partners and Training.
- Reason of interest: Gives a brief overview of the association and his workings.

Costa Rican Association of Rural Tourism Community: www.actuarcostarica.com , Retrieved May 30, 2010.

- Position on the website: Why travel with ACTUAR – Our team, Our history and purpose.
- Reason of interest: Explains well the history and workings of the association.

Costa Rican Tourism Institute: www.visitcostarica.com , Retrieved May 15, 2010.

- Position on the website: About ICT – Costa Rican Tourism Institute, Studies and Special Research, and Legislation for Tourist Companies.
- Reason of interest: Presents a summary of the ICT, the yearly statistic report on the tourism sector, and gives a rundown about the laws related to the tourism industry.

Environmental Performance Index: www.epi.yale.edu , Retrieved June 3, 2010.

- Position on the website: Rankings
- Reason of interest: Gives the rankings of 163 countries in relation to their environmental performance.

Expotur: www.expotur.com , Retrieved May 30, 2010.

- Position on the website: What is Expotur?
- Reason of interest: Provides information about Expotur.

National Chamber of Ecotourism: www.canaeco.org , Retrieved May 29, 2010.

- Position on the website: About us and affiliations.
- Reason of interest: Presents the functioning of the chamber and information about their members.

National Chamber of Tourism: www.canatur.org , Retrieved May 30, 2010.

- Position on the website: Information from the Chamber of Tourism and Services & Benefits.
- Reason of interest: Offers information of the workings of the chamber, the benefits for their members, and other data of the tourism sector.

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National Tourism Cooperative: www.turismoruralcr.com , Retrieved May 30, 2010.

- Position on the website: About COOPRENA and Community-Based Rural Tourism.
- Reason of interest: Gives additional information of the cooperation.

Rainforest Alliance: www.rainforest-alliance.org , Retrieved June 1, 2010.

- Position on the website: Programs – Tourism – Tools and training for tourism professionals, Resources for certification programs, and Frequently asked questions.
- Reason of interest: Provides information of Rainforest Alliance and interesting documents over sustainable tourism and Best Practices.

The World Bank: www.worldbank.org , Retrieved December 19, 2009.

- Position on the website: Countries, Costa Rica, Data & Statistics, Costa Rica Country Data Profile.
- Reason of interest: Offers specific data about Costa Rica.

United Nations Development Programme: www.undp.org , Retrieved December 19, 2009.

- Position on the website: Human Development Reports, Access data and online tools, data by country, Costa Rica.
- Reason of interest: UNDP gives a complete overview of all indicators of the human development of Costa Rica.

Wikipedia: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa_Rica., Retrieved May 19, 2010.

- Position on the website: Costa Rica.
- Reason of interest: Wikipedia offers clear maps of countries

World Travel & Tourism Council: http://www.wttc.org/eng/Tourism_Research/Economic_Data_Search_Tool/, Retrieved May 19, 2010.

- Position on the website: Tourism Research - Economic Data Search Tool
 - Reason of interest: Provides a clear overview of various economic data related with the tourism industry.

APPENDICES



APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: List of appendices on CD

A. Interviews and questionnaires

1. 02.25.2010 ICT - Geovanni Solera
2. 02.25.2010 UTUR - Guillermo Canessa
3. 02.25.2010 CINPE - Marvin Acuña Ortega
4. 02.26.2010 ICT - Virgilio Espinoza
5. 02.26.2010 ICT - Damaris Arrieta
6. 02.26.2010 ACTUAR - Kyra Cruz
7. 03.04.2010 ACOPROT - Carlos Lizama
8. 03.09.2010 COOPRENA - Dayana Amador Prendas
9. 03.10.2010 ACAV - Anabelle Granados
10. 03.10.2010 OET - Liana Babbar
11. 03.10.2010 OET - Patricia Mejia Sirias
12. 03.16.2010 CANATUR - Adriana Brenes
13. 03.19.2010 ACOT - Hannia Cordero
14. 03.25.2010 ACC - Laura Lang
15. Questionnaires of lodging companies
16. Questionnaires of travel agencies
17. Questionnaires of carriers

B. Excel files

1. Overview of interviews and questionnaires
2. Data of CST and ICT
3. Data of all questionnaires (part I)
4. Data of all questionnaires (part II)
5. Calculations of data (part I)
6. Calculations of data (part II)

APPENDIX II: Interview questions – tourism institutions and organizations

The interviews that were conducted with the institutions and organizations didn't follow a fixed list of questions. The questionnaire, as listed below, was followed as a guideline through the interviews.

PART - I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Interviewer:

Date of interview:

Place of interview:

1. The interviewee

1.1 Name of interviewee:

1.2 What is your role or function within the company?

1.3 What is your training background?

2. Tourism institution and organizations

2.1 What is the name of the institution/organization?

2.2 What kind is the institution/organization?

(Public, private, NGO, association, foundation, chamber...)

2.3 What is the working area?

() Local - Where? () National () Central America () International

2.4 Organisational Structure

- How many employees work in the company?

- What is the main function of the institution/organization?

- What are the main objectives of the institution/organization? Did the objective change over time? If so, why?

- Does any documents, texts, conferences... have an influence on the institution/organization? If so, which one and in what way?

2.5 When was the institution/organization founded?

2.6 What is the evolution of the company? Did any events have an influence on the evolution?

2.7 According to you, how can the tourism sector be classified? What are the different types of tourism and how do you define them? (Example: Adventure, eco-, geo-, nature, mass, pro-poor, responsible or sustainable tourism)

PART - II: PERCEPTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

3. The environment

3.1 Do you think that the environmental (water, soil, biodiversity...) is important for the tourism sector?

- If so, what are the three most important environmental themes?
- If not, why not?

3.2 What are the major environmental challenges at the country level and related to tourism? (The climate change, biodiversity, water management, water contamination, noise, pollution of solid waste...)

3.3 What is the strategy of the institution/organization to preserve the environment?

4. Environmental services

4.1 Do you know the concept (or notion) of the "Environmental Services"?

4.2 If known:

- How, when and in what context did you hear of this concept?
- What do you think of this concept (is useful in the tourism sector)?

4.3 Does the institution/organization mobilize the concept of environmental services in their activities?

- If so: Since when?

In what way?

- If not: Why not?

What are the holding back factors?

4.4 In your opinion, what is the evolution of this concept?

4.5 What is the strategy of the institution/organization on the environmental services?

PART - III: RELATIONS AND TOURISM SECTOR

5. Relations

5.1 Does the institution/organization have an interaction with tourism actors related to the environment?

<i>With who?</i>	<i>Since when?</i>	<i>Why?</i>	<i>What kind of interaction?</i>

5.2 Are there any other actors who have an influence on the institution/organization?

- If so: Who and in what way?

6. Tourism sector

6.1 According to you, what is the strategy of the tourism sector?

6.2 In your opinion, what is the evolution of the relationship between the tourism industry and the environment?

6.3 What are the policies who have an important impact on the tourism sector?

PART - IV: PROGRAMS

7. General

7.1 How does the program work?

7.2 What are the main objectives of the program?

7.3 What are the rules and way of working?

7.4 How is the program financed?

7.5 Who benefits from the program?

7.6 Who suffers from the program?

7.7 Are there any difficulties with the implementation of the program?

7.8 What improvements would you suggest for the program?

8. Participants

8.1 Who can participate in the program?

8.2 Is the participation voluntary or mandatory?

8.3 What are the advantages and disadvantages for the participants?

9. Evolution of program

9.1 When did the program started?

9.2 What is the evolution of the program?

9.3 What are the future plans?

PART - VI: OTHER COMMENTS

10. Contacts or useful information

10.1 Who should I contact or what other programs are interesting for this study?

10.2 What documents could be valuable for this study?

10.3 Are there any other experiences, actions or initiatives that are interesting?

11. Other comments

11.1 Are you satisfied with the current regime? Please give reasons:

11.2 Do you have any comments?

12. My opinion

APPENDIX III: List of interviewees

Acuña Ortega, Marvin. M. Sc. Economía. Centro Internacional de Política Económica para el Desarrollo Sostenible. Heredia. February 25, 2010.

Amador Prendas, Dayana. Quality and competitiveness consultant. National Tourism Cooperative. San José. March 9, 2010.

Babbar, Liana. General director. Organization for Tropical Studies. San José. March 10, 2010.

Brenes, Adriana. Director of marketing and events. National Chamber of Tourism. San José. March 16, 2010.

Canessa, Guillermo. Director of institutional relations and student life. University of Tourism of Costa Rica, San José. February 25, 2010.

Cordero, Hannia. Executive Director. Costa Rican Association of Tour Operators. San José. March 19, 2010.

Cruz, Kyra. Director. Costa Rican Association of Rural Tourism Community, San José. February 26, 2010.

Damaris, Arrieta. Department of Rural Community-Based Tourism. Costa Rican Tourism Institute, San José. February 26, 2010 and March 2, 2010.

Espinoza, Virgilio. Tourism sustainability. Costa Rican Tourism Institute, San José. February 26, 2010.

Granados, Anabelle. Executive Director. Costa Rican Association of Travel Agencies. San José. March 10, 2010.

Lang Patiño, Laura. Executive Director. Climate Change Allies Program. San José. March 25, 2010.

Lizama, Carlos. Board president. Costa Rican Association of Tourism Professionals. San José. March 3, 2010.

Mejia Sirias, Patricia. Marketing & Sales Manager. Organization for Tropical Studies. San José. March 10, 2010.

Morales, Raquel. Technical Associate. Rainforest Alliance. San José. April 15, 2010.

Solera Córdoba, Geovanni. Tourism planning. Costa Rican Tourism Institute, San José. February 25, 2010.

APPENDIX IV: Questionnaire – tourism companies**PART - I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

Interviewer:

Date of interview:

Place of interview:

1. The interviewee

1.1 Name of interviewee:

1.2 What is your role or function within the company?

1.3 What is your training background?

2. The company

2.1 What is the name of the company?

2.2 What is the company?

- ☐ Lodging company: ☐Bed & Breakfast ☐Lodge ☐Resort ☐Hostel ☐Cottage
☐Hotel ☐Other
- ☐ Travel Agency ☐ Tour Operator
- ☐ Carrier: ☐Vehicle rentals ☐Buses ☐Air transport company ☐Other

2.3 What is the working area?

- ☐ Local - Where? ☐ National ☐ Central America ☐ International

2.4 How do you consider the company in the market?

- ☐Small ☐Medium ☐Large

2.5 Organisational Structure

- How many employees work in the company?
- How many offices are there?
- What are the locations of the offices?

2.6 In what kind of tourism do you operate?

(Adventure, eco, geo-, nature, mass, pro-poor, responsible or sustainable tourism)

- How do you define that?
- Why?
- Did the type of tourism change during the last years? If so, why?

2.7 How is your company positioned in the market? And why?

- ☐National ☐Central America ☐United States & Canada ☐Europe ☐Others
- ☐Individual ☐Groups

2.8 When was the company founded?

2.9 What is the evolution of the company?

2.10 Which events have affected the evolution of your company (market demand, certain laws, institutional change, global crises ...)?

<i>Year</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Generated changes</i>

3. Characteristics of the activity

3.1 For lodging company:

- How many rooms are there?
- What is the average occupancy rate in a year?
- When is the high and low season?

3.2 For travel agency:

- What is the average amount of clients per year?
- In what kind of tours is the company specialized?
- Does the company work with own guides? If so, how many?

3.3 For carrier:

- Vehicles rental: How many rentals are there?
 What is the average occupancy rate in a year?
 What is the general amount of days to rent out a car?
- Buses: How many buses and drivers are there in the company?
 How many days to rent a bus and driver services?
 What is the average occupancy rate in a year?

PART - II: PERCEPTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

4. The environment

4.1 Do you think that the environmental (water, soil, biodiversity...) is important for the tourism sector?

- If so, what are the three most important environmental themes?

<i>Environmental theme</i>	<i>In what way is it important?</i>

- If not, why not?

4.2 How do you consider the environment for the company?

- Does the company receive benefits (economical, opportunities...) from the environment?
- Are there any disadvantages related to the environment?

4.3 In your opinion, what are the three main environmental problems of the country?

4.4 What are the major environmental challenges at the country level? Sort by importance: 1 (very important) - 6 (least important).

	<i>Environmental challenge (country level)</i>	<i>Why?</i>
	The climate change	
	The biodiversity	
	The water management	
	The water contamination	
	The noise	
	The pollution of solid waste	
	Others:	

4.5 What are the five most important environmental challenges related to the tourism sector? (Water treatment system, waste, noise, air quality, biodiversity, etc...)

	<i>Environmental challenge (tourism level)</i>	<i>Why?</i>

4.7 According to you, what actions should be implemented in the tourism sector in order to address those challenges?

4.8 In your opinion, what are the most important ecosystems to preserve the environment? Sort by importance: 1 (very important) - 6 (least important).

	<i>Ecosystems</i>	<i>Why?</i>
	The forests	
	The farmland	
	The protected areas	
	The coastal areas and beaches	
	The marine ecosystem	
	The aquatic ecosystems (rivers, lakes...)	
	Others:	

4.9 Does the company receive a request to be environmental friendly?

<i>By whom? (Other touristic companies, the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, the tourists...)</i>	<i>Concerning what? (Conservation of water, recycling, emissions...)</i>

5. The environmental services

5.1 Do you know the concept (or notion) of the “Environmental Services”?

5.2 If known:

- How, when and in what context did you hear of this concept?
- What do you think of this concept (is useful in the tourism sector)?

5.3 How would you sort the services according to their importance? In general and related to the tourism sector? Sort by importance: 1 (very important) – 4 (least important).

<i>Environmental Service</i>	<i>In general</i>	<i>Tourism</i>
Mitigation of emissions of greenhouse gases (fixation, reduction, sequestration, storage and absorption)		
Protection of water (for urban, rural or hydroelectric)		
Protection of biodiversity (for conservation and sustainable use, scientific and pharmaceutical research and breeding, as well as for the protection of ecosystems and life forms)		
Scenic beauty (for tourism and scientific)		

5.4 In your opinion, who is responsible for maintaining these environmental services?

5.5 How do you think the actors of the tourism sector should help in this maintenance?

5.6 In your opinion, what is the “scenic beauty”?

- Do you consider “scenic beauty” as an environmental service?
- Who is responsible of the service?
- Who is maintaining this service?
- How do you think the actors in the tourism sector should contribute in the maintenance? If so, in what way?

5.7 Does the company mobilize the concept of environmental services in their activities?

- If so: Since when?

In what way? (Encourage tourists to visit the protected areas, own a private natural reserve ...)

- If not: Why not?

What are the holding back factors?

5.8 Do you know any other tourism initiatives that use this concept of environmental services? If so, explain.

PART - III: EFFECT OF POLICIES AND PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS

6. Policies, programs and initiatives

6.1 What policies or laws affected or are affecting the company?

<i>What?</i>	<i>On what level? (National, local)</i>	<i>Are the voluntary or compulsory?</i>	<i>How has this affected? (positively or negatively)</i>	<i>In what way?</i>

7. Participation in programs (What is the company's strategy to preserve the environment?)

7.1 Did the company developed own initiatives or specific actions to help the environment?

<i>Year</i>	<i>Actions / Initiatives</i>	<i>Why? (Personal interests to help the environment, to diversity from the others, respond on market demand, to be innovative...)</i>	<i>Did the company receive support? If so, from who? In what way? (Technical, financial). Were there any difficulties?</i>	<i>What kind of investment was there and how much was it?</i>	<i>What are the advantages and limitations?</i>

7.2 Does the company participate in an environmental program? (Example: CST, Ecological Blue Flag, Rainforest Alliance, Carbon Neutral...)

<i>What?</i>	<i>What level?</i>	<i>Since when?</i>	<i>What are the benefits?</i>	<i>Why does the company participate?</i>

7.3 Why doesn't the company participate in the programs? Or why doesn't the company has environmental friendly actions or initiatives?

<i>What?</i>	<i>What are the obstacles? (Not properly informed? Not interested?)</i>	<i>What are the limitations or difficulties?</i>	<i>What are the possible improvements?</i>

7.4 Do you think the company has benefited from the actions, initiatives or programs?

- In what way?
- To what extent? (Size of the impact, positively or negatively...)

7.5 After the participation into the program(s) or implementation of the actions/initiatives, did the tourist have to pay more or less? Is it more expensive to be 'sustainable'?

7.6 Do you know the "Program Payments for Environmental Services" (PPES) of FONAFIFO?

- Did the company ever participate in this program?
Did they receive funding or contributed to the program? How much?
What is your opinion about PPES?
What improvements would you suggest?
- Do you think that PPES could be applied in the tourism industry?
In what way?
Who would benefit from it and in what way?
- Do you think that the tourism actors should contribute in PPES? And in this way pay to others who improve their practices and maintain the environment?
With the program of FONAFIFO or other programs?
In what way?
At what level?
In what kind of conditions?
What improvements would you suggest?

7.7 Do you know the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST)?

- How did you hear about CST?
- Is the company interested to participate?
- What improvements would you suggest?
- What are the holding back factors for not obtaining a CST?

7.8 Do you know some initiatives in the tourism sector which includes the concept of environmental services?

8. Relations with other actors

8.1 Is the company member of other organizations or institutions? (Example: ACOPROT ACAV, ACOT, CANAECO, CANATUR, COOPRENA)

<i>With who?</i>	<i>Since when?</i>	<i>Why?</i>	<i>Did the relationship with the organization change?</i>	<i>Is the membership important? (0 low to 5 very important)</i>	<i>What are the advantages of being member?</i>

8.2 Did the company developed partnerships with other companies related to the environment?

<i>With who?</i>	<i>Since when?</i>	<i>Why?</i>	<i>What kind of partnership? (Set of resources, joint action, etc)</i>

PART - IV: PROSPECTS AND OTHER COMMENTS

9. Perspectives

9.1 How do you visualize the importance of the environmental in the future?

9.2 Do you think what is happening now is enough?

- If not, why not?
- What should happen?
- Who should make it happen?

9.3 Does the company have any future projects in mind related to the environment?

10. Other comments

10.1 Are you satisfied with the current regime? Please give reasons:

10.2 Do you have any comments?

11. My opinion

APPENDIX V: List of the questionnaire participants

Alfaro, Hernán Ramús. Executive director. Albergue Nacientes Palmichal. Palmichal. March 27, 2010.

Araya, Christian. Director of Inbound Tourism. Miki Travel Agency. San José. March 22, 2010.

Ayala, Mark. President. Sol Tropical Tours. San José. March 24, 2010.

Balducci, Ivanno. President. La Casa de Las Flores. Cahuita. March 31, 2010.

Barbone, Minnie. President. Terraventuras. Puerto Viejo. April 1, 2010.

Barrantes, Mario. Manager of public relations. Best Western Irazu. San José. April 6, 2010.

Bartarioni Casti, Liza. Partner. Café Rico. Puerto Viejo. April 4, 2010.

Chaves, Manuel. Manager of operations and informatics. Hotel Balmoral. San José. April 7, 2010.

Corrales, Ana. Department of sustainability. Horizontes Nature Tours. San José. March 26, 2010.

Escobar Arango, Bernardo. Manager. Hotel Capital. San José. April 6, 2010.

Ewing, Natalie. Chief marketing and guest satisfaction officer. Costa Rican Expeditions. San José. March 25, 2010.

Güell, Maria. President. Cinco Hermigas Rojas. San José. April 7, 2010.

Guerra Urcuyo. Leonidas. Sales department. Viamundo. San José. April 6, 2010.

Jimenez, Karen. Project development executive. Interbus. San José. March 26, 2010

Kraack, Ester. President's assistant. Hotel Ricón de San José. San José. April 7, 2010.

Lopez, Jackeline. Administrative and sustainability manager. Mapache. San José. March 23, 2010.

Mora, Carlos. President. Del Bosque Tourism. San José. March 24, 2010.

Morales, Nogy. Manager. U-Save Car & Truck Rental. San José. April 8, 2010.

Rodriguez, Mario. Manager. Diana's Inn. San José. April 6, 2010.

Rojas Cabezas, Alejandra. Marketing. Nature Air. San José. April 14, 2010.

Sanabria Zuñiga, Jahaira. President's assistant. Hotel Don Carlos. San José. April 7, 2010.

Sibaja, Wally. President. Marbella Tours. San José. March 24, 2010.

Siles, Luis Diego. General Manager. 4x4 Rent a Car. San José. March 23, 2010.

Smicker, Roberto. President. Aventuras Roberto. Cahuita. March 31, 2010.

Solís, Elizabeth. Department of sustainability. Ecole Travel. San José. March 29, 2010.

Spencer, Joseph. President. Mister Big J. Cahuita. March 31, 2010.

Van Dyck, Kirk. President. Puerto Viejo Hotel. Puerto Viejo. April 1, 2010.